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MAGAZINE



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SCOTT ROCKENFIELD Of Queensrÿche

SOL GUBIN

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**THE MYLAR
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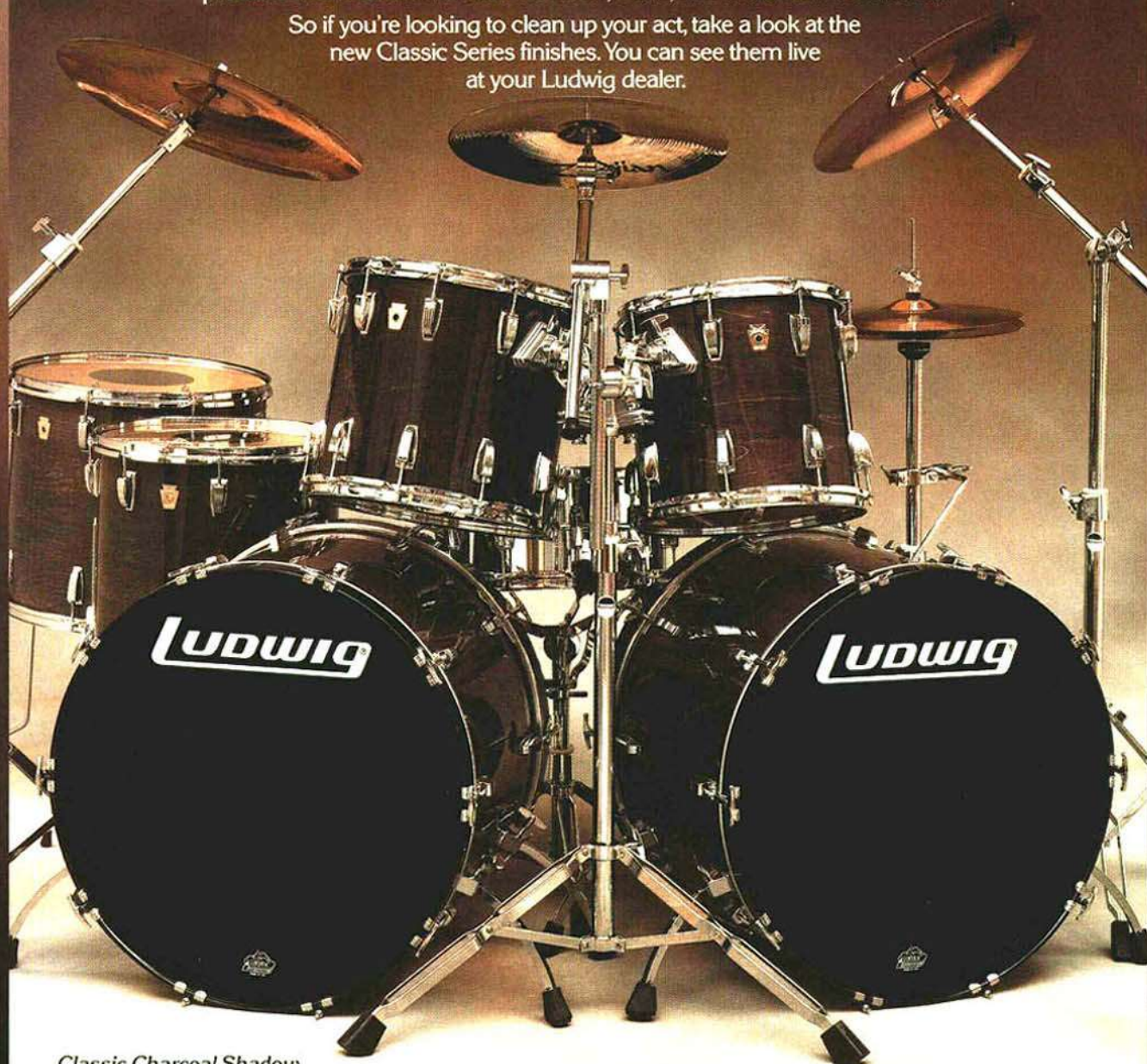
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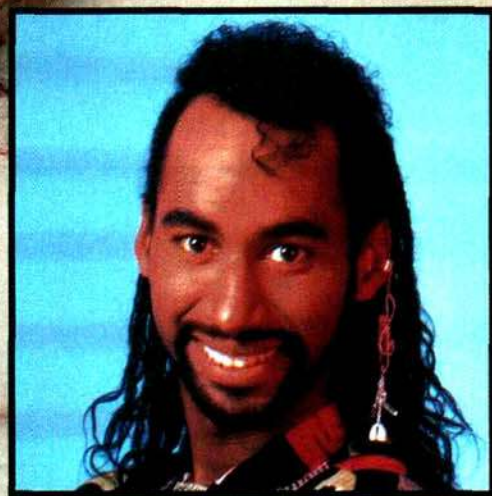
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FEATURES

18 CHRIS FRANTZ

During his time off from Talking Heads, Chris Frantz likes to keep busy with his own band, Tom Tom Club, who have recently released a new record and toured to promote it. Chris discusses his drumming in both groups, and talks about his role as Ziggy Marley's producer.

by Robert Santelli

24 SCOTT ROCKENFIELD

As the drummer for Queensryche, Scott Rockenfield is expected to play in the typical metal style. In this conversation, he explains how he is able to remain true to that genre and yet expand on it through different colors and dynamics.

by Teri Saccone

28 SOL GUBIN

First in New York and then in L.A., Sol Gubin has maintained a 30-plus-year career as an in-demand studio player, working in situations ranging from Count Basie to live TV to movie soundtracks. He reminisces about his life in this revealing portrait.

by Robyn Flans

34 The Development of THE MYLAR DRUMHEAD

Although plastic drumheads are taken for granted today, a great deal of time and effort went into creating them, and a number of prominent people were involved. We talk to Remo Belli, Chick Evans, William F. Ludwig, Jr., and others to learn the story behind one of the most important products in the drumming world.

by Charles "Woody" Thompson

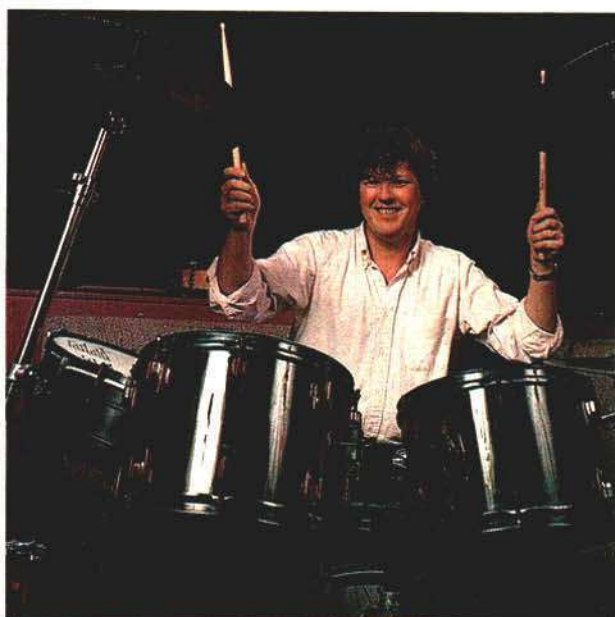


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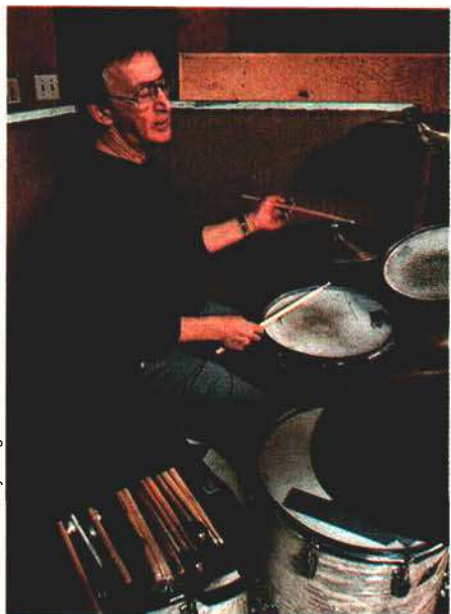


Photo by Jaeger Koros

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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

On The List

If you subscribe to several different magazines, you may have noticed that you're also receiving mail related to the subject matter of those magazines. As a subscriber, your name is valuable to companies in related fields. A subscription is an indication that you have more than a passing interest in the subject, and could be a potential customer for other goods or services. As a result, these companies are usually most anxious to send you their promotional literature through the mail. How do they obtain your name? Among other methods, by renting it from magazines with related-interest subscriber listings.

We function in a manner similar to most publications; however, *MD's* subscriber list is made available *only* to companies in the drum or general music industry. No need to be concerned that any solicitations you may have received from insurance firms or encyclopedia publishers have come from companies who've obtained your name from us!

Along with protecting subscribers from unrelated direct-mail advertising, most publishers are also concerned with shielding their readers from fraudulent or distasteful mail solicitations. *MD* subscribers are protected from this on two fronts: First, all potential list users must go through our national list management company, which acts as a preliminary screening agent. Further to this, any material intended for mailing must be approved by the management of *MD*. Should the literature be unrelated to our industry, or should further investigation lead us to believe that the mailing might contain fraudulent or misleading information, that company is refused access to the list.

Despite the numerous precautions most ethical publishers take, direct-mail agency studies have revealed that approximately 1% of every magazine's subscriber list would rather not receive *anything* through the mail—related or otherwise. And that's definitely a right they have as subscribers. If you're an *MD* subscriber, and if you fall among that 1% who would prefer not to have their name released to drumming-related firms, we can certainly honor that request. Simply drop us a note stating so, and your name will be flagged on the computer and subsequently deleted from the list when it's rented.

Interestingly, the studies mentioned above clearly indicate that the overwhelming majority of subscribers are *not* opposed to receiving literature—provided of course that it's related to the subject matter of the magazine. Most readers even appreciate being advised of new products, services, savings offers, or special events that relate to the primary focus of a publication. Again, a small percentage will always prefer to remain forever anonymous. As far as *Modern Drummer* goes, you can have it either way.

RS

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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Susan Alexander, Robyn Flans, Simon Goodwin, Karen Ervin Pershing, Jeff Potter, Teri Saccone, Robert Santelli, Bob Saydowski, Jr., Robin Tolleson, Lauren Vogel, T. Bruce Wittet.

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Street Rod

Rod Morgenstein's talent has taken him down some interesting musical streets. His playing broke plenty of rules with the highly acclaimed Dixie Dregs. He toured the musical ozone layer with the Steve Morse Band. And now, the rest of the world has the chance to hear Rod with America's first hard-rock-with-chops heroes — Winger.

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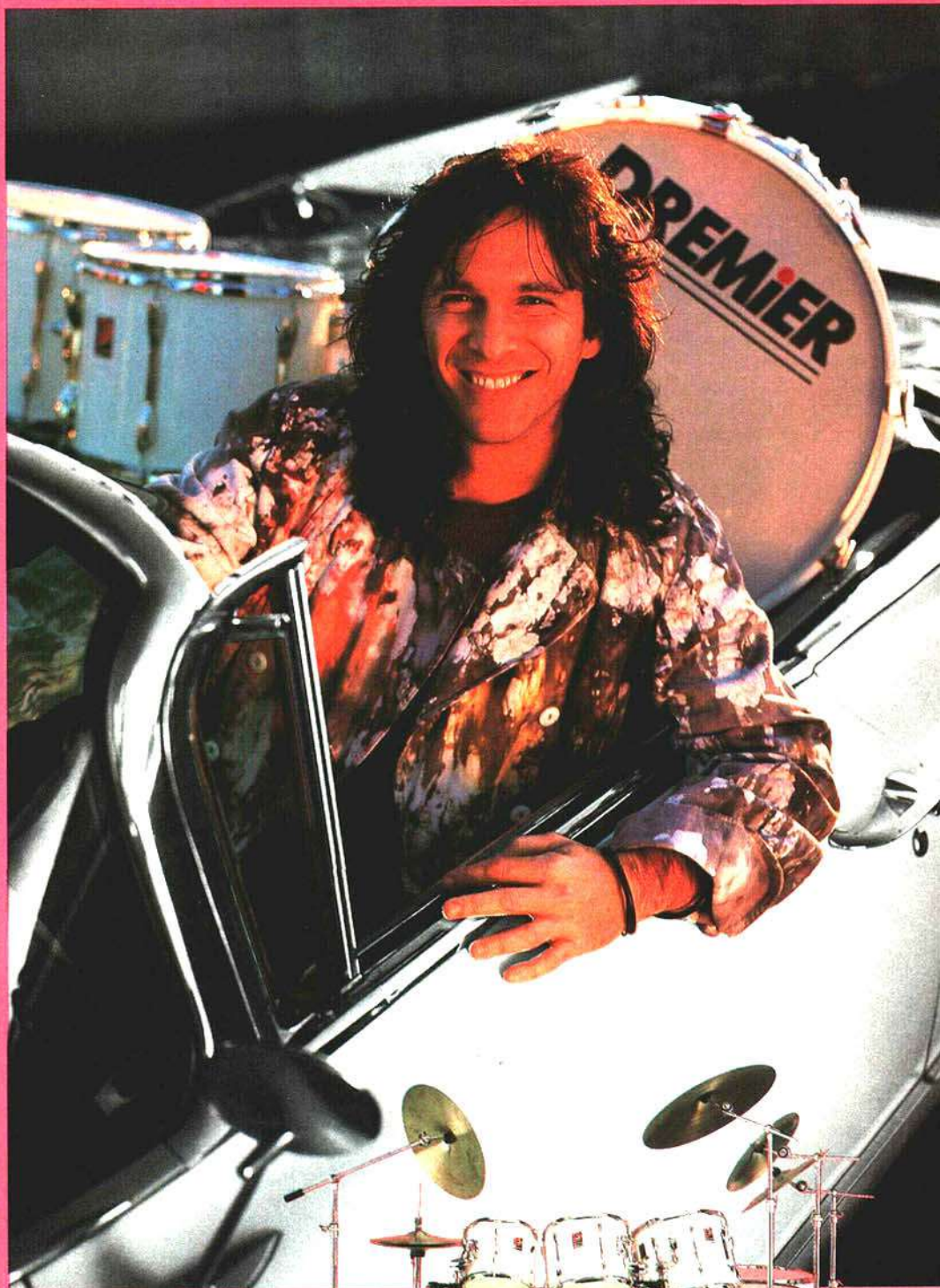
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READERS' PLATFORM

DENNIS CHAMBERS

I saw Dennis Chambers play at the *MD Drum Festival* last September, and was thrilled beyond words. I hadn't really heard of Dennis prior to that, and so was eager to find out more about him. What a joy it was to see him on the cover of your May '89 issue! The story was great; it filled me in on a lot of the background I was curious about. I'm on my way to the record store now to pick up some of the albums suggested by Dennis in the *Listener's Guide*!

Billy Selwin
Utica NY

ON ENDORSEMENTS

Editor's note: In the April '89 issue of MD, Ron Spagnardi offered some thoughts on artist endorsements of percussion products, and invited readers to submit their comments. Here is a representative sampling of those comments.

I, for one, have never purchased merchandise based on a name-artist endorsement. I think it's more logical to purchase equipment that feels comfortable and sounds good to my ear, rather than basing my decision on [the opinion of] someone I don't have a chance in hell of ever talking to.

There seems to be a certain impersonal feeling to buying products because a leading drummer uses them. I get more out of talking to drummers I know, and finding out what *they* think. I also get a lot more personal satisfaction out of buying an item that I feel is outstanding, and then later discovering which name artists I admire endorse the product.

Rey Washam
Chicago IL

Once an artist endorses a brand, he or she should stay with the company for at least five years. I like to see some degree of loyalty. I really admire artists who stay with a company for 10 or 20 years.

Ken Sommerhalter
Aberdeen NJ

I won't buy a brand that doesn't have any endorsers. I assume the company couldn't get any. But among those with a list of endorsements, I honestly think they all have about the same quality. I don't care who endorses a line, as long as it's one of the many artists I respect.

Adam Cooke
Baltimore MD

I listened to a lot of drummers when I was coming up, but I never really paid attention to what brand of equipment they used. Let's face it: Any drum can sound great if it's played well.

Alex J. Valasquez
Roeland Park KS

I rely a great deal on my drum teacher. I feel I can trust a person I work with on a regular, one-on-one basis, as opposed to someone who might be getting paid to endorse. Actually, I think most people rely on the opinions of those around them.

Phil Moseley
Houston TX

I was strongly influenced by endorsements during my formative years. As time passed, I saw several major figures drift from company to company, and it definitely left an unfavorable impression on me. What they

play is certainly their business, but it is disillusioning to see people jumping around. At this point in my career, endorsements have little or no impact on me. That's partly because I'm so set in my preferences now, and partly because I don't take them that seriously.

Mike Kolesar
Pittsburgh PA

If a company puts out quality merchandise, let the excellent workmanship speak for itself. Let the best work—not the shrewdest salesman—win!

Tina Ivastanin
Constantine MI

GETTING THE RIGHT SOUND IN THE STUDIO

I have been reading your magazine and playing drums seriously for ten years. I love *MD* and can't wait for the next issue. *MD* has always been a place to learn about drums, and I think it is a major reason why drummers aren't so competitive and don't have an "I can outplay you" attitude these days.

However, one article in your May '89 issue has me very upset. It was titled "Getting The Right Sound In The Studio." It should have been titled "Getting The T. Bruce Wittet Sound In The Studio." This was the most narrow-minded article on drums I've ever had the displeasure of reading. Mr. Wittet is obviously a veteran of the studio, but his "do it my way" attitude is just the kind of thing that turns young drummers off.

When talking about using one micro-

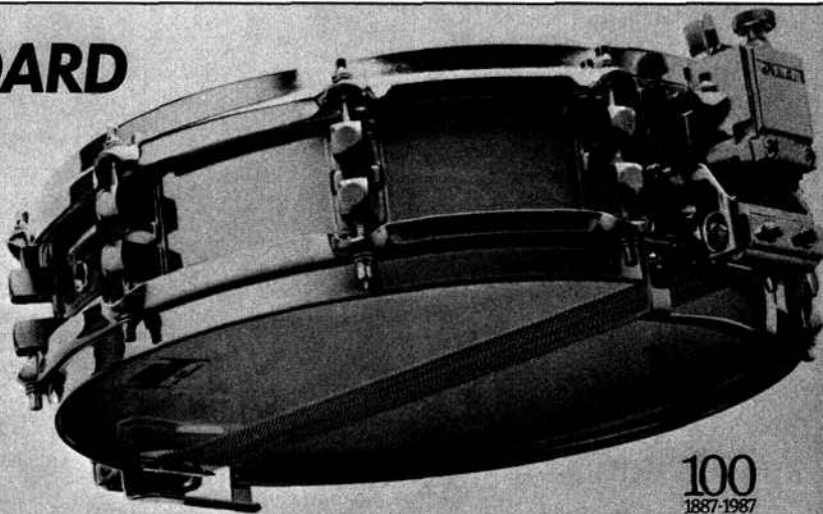
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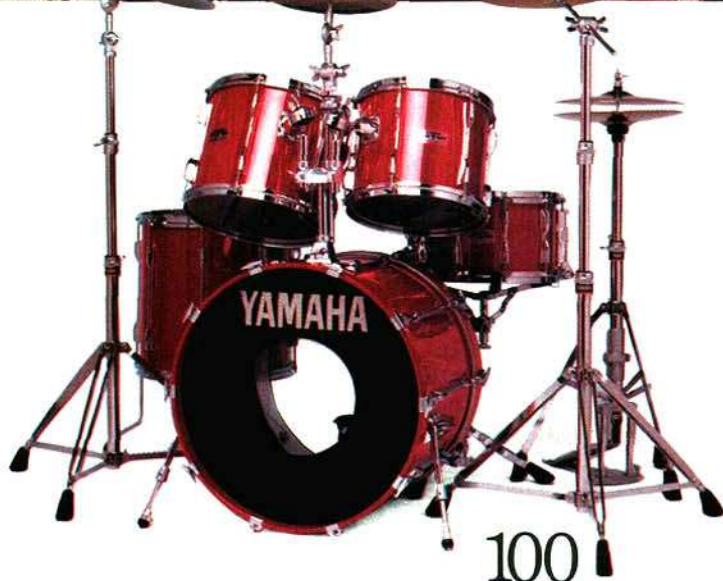


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Steve Smith

Photo by Joseph Quever



Steve Smith has committed most of this year to Steps Ahead. The band released *N.Y.C.* at the beginning of the year, reflecting personnel changes in the band. Composer/sax player Bendic replaced Mike Brecker, which is a major musical change for the group.

"It's become more of a composition-oriented band and less of a jazz blowing band," Steve explains. "The material covers a wider spectrum of music. We do stuff that is very mellow and ethereal as well as the high-energy stuff, whereas with the old Steps, it was all pretty intense most of the time."

He says the approach is not very different from his own band, Vital Information, which hopes to release a live album in the fall. "It's similar in a lot of ways. Everybody is a strong player, and the music has great melodies to it rather than it being real angular jazz. A lot of the blowing is open in both situations as far as there not being a lot of chord changes. For a drummer, it's different only because the songs are different and the players are different, but conceptually it's the same. I guess the only difference is that in Vital Information I'm the band leader and in the Steps situation I'm a band member, so I'm taking a back seat as far as my own opinions about everything. I'm letting Mike Mainieri pretty much run the thing, and it's kind of nice to not have to work so hard thinking about

the entire picture.

"Both situations require that I have a lot of technique and facility on the instrument," Steve continues, "because the music isn't easy technically. It requires being sensitive to what's going on around me and reacting to that in a mature way. I definitely have to learn parts, but that's only a small part of it. It's very improvisational, and that improvisation can be real busy, complex playing or it can be real spacious playing, being sensitive to the composition and the soloist."

Apart from Steps, Steve's been doing an incredible variety of recording, playing everything from jazz to heavy metal with power ballads to one track with the Turtle Island String Quartet for their Windham Hill Jazz *Metropolis* album. "They arrange jazz standards and some originals, but play them as a string quartet with improvisation, which makes them different from any other string quartet," says Steve. "The song was pretty difficult, so it was very challenging. And that was different, because the day before I did that, I played on Neal Schon's solo record, *Late Nite*. Omar Hakim played on the rest of it, but some of the things I did were real reminiscent of the Journey ballads. It's a great record."

New artist Richie Kotzenin had Steve play on his debut heavy metal instrumental album on Shrapnel Records, and Steve also played on a Japanese release by the lead singer of Loudness, which Steve describes as mainstream pop. And in his off time, Steve is concentrating on his writing.

—Robyn Flans

Gary Ferguson

A little over a year ago, Gary Ferguson moved back to L.A. from London, and a friend of his, Tony Berg, hooked him up with Charlie Sexton. "I ended up going to Tony's house, where he has a studio in back, and I met Charlie. We were just going to play a little bit and see how it went. We started running down these songs, and we just musically

hit it off. One thing lead to another, and they asked me if I would go to New York to do the record.

"I was really excited because I finally got to work with Bob Clearmountain, who I've always liked; I think he gets exceptional drum sounds. I also got to work with Carmine Rojas, who I knew from David Bowie albums, and we hit it off right away, too. We rehearsed for about ten days in Woodstock, New York, and then we went into the studio. It took about a day to get the drum sounds up, and then we started to track, averaging a couple of tracks a day. We completed all the basic tracks in about ten days, which I think was pretty quick for how meticulous we were about it."

Gary's favorite cut on the album is "Blowing Up Detroit" because there were no overdubs or repairs done to the basic track, but he says one of the more interesting tracks for him to do was "Cry Little Sister." "I set up the drums differently," he explains. "I set up a second snare drum to the left of the hi-hat, reversed the rack tom-toms, and came up with a different kind of pattern. The song is about vampires and it's supposed to be real haunting and menacing, so I thought I should do something a little off the wall, but organized. I thought if I changed the drum configuration around, a lot of things I would play naturally would sound different without having to completely readjust how I would play."

Right after the making of Sexton's album, Gary went back to England for three months to work on a project by Atlantic Records' Big Big Sun. When he returned to the States, he walked into a project with Chris Spedding.

Following that, rehearsals began with Sexton, and the summer will be spent mostly on the road, including dates in Japan and Australia. Gary hopes, however, to be able to do some touring with Big Big Sun if scheduling permits. Working that kind of stuff out can be tricky sometimes. "One thing I've learned is not to let these things bother me and to

get on with what's in front of me, because if I think about it too much, it will make me crazy," he laughs.

—Robyn Flans

Audie Desbrow



Photo by Mark Weiss

When success and a platinum album finally landed on Great White's doorstep last year, drummer Audie Desbrow says he was ready, "because I had been in the business for quite a few years before this band. Everybody pays their dues; you keep paying them as you get more successful. By the time *Once Bitten* went platinum, I felt we had been earning it, so I wasn't unprepared."

With this attitude, Desbrow undertook the collective making of *Twice Shy*. More a blues album than the heavy metal one might expect, the record has anyone who knows the band predicting a volley to the top. It's no accident that *Twice Shy*, like its predecessors, is written, performed, arranged, and produced solely and exclusively by Great White.

This marks Desbrow's third album with Great White and, as usual, he employed a click track "as reference to keep my meter close to precise. I would never want to be so precise as to be like a drum machine, because even though it's so perfect, there's no heart and soul in it. It was never enforced for me to use a click, but I feel more confident and secure knowing that when I hear my tracks, they're on the money."

"All my drum sounds are real," insists Audie. "There are no samplers or electronics in-

TROY TESLA TAMA MAN MADE LIGHTNING

The world may have ignored the mad genius of Nikola Tesla (designer of the voltage generating Tesla coil who is reputed to have invented the radio before Marconi), but the music world isn't ignoring the electric energy of Troy Lucketta of Tesla and Tama Rockstar series drums. Check out Troy on Tesla's latest release "The Great Radio Controversy" on Geffen Records.

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volved other than reverb and the ambiance of the room. I prefer to keep it realistic, both live and in the studio."

Asked if he believes there is a signature to his style, Audie modestly replies, "I don't know. I can recognize a lot of drummers' playing, but I don't know if I've done enough yet musically to be identified that way, other than being in Great White. There are certain things I do that make it 'my playing,' just like other drummers have certain licks in their songs that are identifiable to their style. I can't see what mine is as of yet. It's hard to answer. The only thing people identify me with is that I'm real solid and I try to be as creative as possible within the realms of Great White's sound. I don't want to go off and try to pull some weird creative thing that doesn't gel with our music."

As satisfied as he is with Great White as a recording entity, Desbrow's primary love is the stage, and at mixing time, all he could think of was taking *Twice Shy* to the arenas. "I don't think I could ever get tired of being on tour," he states. "I always wanted to go on the road. After all the hours in the studio, it's such a reward to be able to play it live for people and meet the fans. Those things are really important."

—Elainne Halbersberg

Rob Affuso



Rob Affuso laughs as he relates the story of his audition with Skid Row: "Before Skid Row, Snake, the guitar player, had auditioned for a band that I was in, which was a very

keyboard-dominated pop synth band. I guess he got a really bad taste for it because he likes hard rock, which I do too, but I grew up on Carl Palmer, Neil Peart, and Phil Collins, so I love that stuff, too. I guess he didn't think I was such a great drummer because he didn't like the music.

"When I heard Skid Row was auditioning and I decided I wanted to get into something new, I called him and said I'd like to come down to audition, but he kept putting me off. Finally, when they were getting desperate, they gave me a tape and I practiced the hell out of it. I really learned the material and went in for the audition. They told me later that after the first song, Rachel [Bolan], the bass player, leaned over to Snake and said, 'If we pass on this guy, we're idiots.' I think I really did blow Snake away. He was not expecting what he heard."

The audition took place in the winter of '86, and the band had its final lineup by the fall of '87. When Jon Bon Jovi, a friend of Snake's, heard a tape, he invited Skid Row to open a couple of dates for Bon Jovi. Their first gig was in front of 10,000 people, and Bon Jovi's manager signed them immediately afterwards. Four months later, Atlantic Records signed the band, and they began their first album.

"I had been in the studio a lot and had worked with a click track, so I wasn't too worried about it—until I got there," Rob recalls. "We did the drums in a big convention center because we wanted to use the natural reverb of the room, which was pretty cool. But I was playing in a room by myself, as opposed to having the other guys around, and I had to look at them through a video screen. The big problem was that the first couple of days there, I was freaking myself out, thinking, 'These are the first tracks; if I do anything wrong it'll screw up the rest of the album.' I was playing games with myself. After the first track, 'Piece Of Me,' I mellowed out a bit and got into the groove, and I was a lot more comfortable."

This summer Skid Row is on

the road with Bon Jovi, and Rob says their audiences are extremely open to the band. "The opening band usually has a quarter of the crowd, and we've already been increasing the attendance for our show. They're extremely responsive; at just about every show the promoter says he's never seen a crowd respond like that to an opening band. It's incredible."

—Robyn Flans

News...

Ian Wallace working with Stephen Stills and Don Henley.

Mick Fleetwood in the studio with Fleetwood Mac.

Vic Mastrianni can be heard on Reba McEntire's live album. Also, congratulations to Vic and his wife Susan on the birth of their daughter Cara Katherine.

Rod Morgenstein can be heard on Steve Morse's solo album *High Tension Wires*.

Ingo Schwichtenberg on tour with Helloween.

Eddie Bayers on albums by New Grass Revival, Holly Dunn, John Anderson, Mark



Photo by Rick Malkin

O'Connor, Danielle Alexander, Vince Gill, Keith Whitley, Michael Murphy, Sawyer Brown, Rodney Crowell, the McCarter Sisters, Dan Seals, as well as on the soundtrack for *Next Of Kin*. Congratulations to Eddie for winning the Music Row Musicians Poll for the most top-10 albums played on in Nashville in the last year.

Alan Jones working with David Friesen.

Cactus Moser on albums by Mark Lowry and J.C. Crowley. A new Highway 101 album



will be out in the fall.

Congratulations to **Phil Collins**, who won a Grammy Award for "Best Song Written Specifically For A Motion Picture Or Television" with "Two Hearts."

Michael Blair in the studio with Shawn Colvin.

Drummer and bongo player **Billy Ficca** on tour with The Washington Squares.

Kenny Malone on Sandy Mason's album.

Gene Barnett on new album by Dirty Looks.

Congratulations to Vicki and **Joe Smyth** on the birth of their daughter Jenna Brienne.

Jerry Angel playing live with Carole King.

Billy West recently in studio with Dolly Parton, Jeff Turner, and Freddie & The Screammers.

Greg "Fritz" Hinz recording and touring with Helix.

Congratulations to **Albert Bouchard** and Deborah Frost on the birth of their son, Abraham.

Larry Spivack is musical director/solo performer with the Broadway production of *Metamorphosis* featuring Mikhail Baryshnikov.

David Derge working with David Benoit.

Chico Hamilton has a new band called Euphoria.

The Harold Howland Ensemble has a record coming out on Soul Note, called *Reiko*.

Herman Matthews touring and recording with Kirk Whalum, touring with Bob James, and drumming with Kenny Loggins.

Jim Keltner recently in the studio with Eric Clapton.

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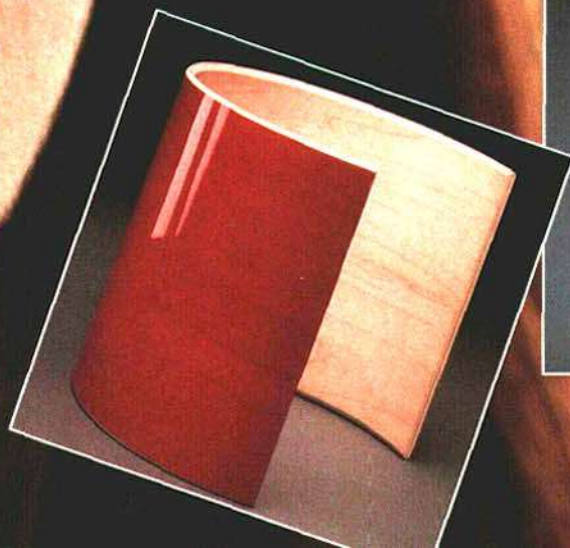
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VINNY APPICE



Photo by Gene Kirkland

Q. Let me start by saying how much I have enjoyed your work with Dio since *Holy Diver*—not to mention your previous work with Black Sabbath and Rick Derringer. I have heard two songs by your first band, Axis, on your instructional video (which is just phenomenal). I was wondering if and how I can get a copy of those two albums. Also, how do you get your bass drum sound live? What is the tension like on the batter head? Do you still use Duraline heads on your bass and snare drums? When will we be hearing something new from Dio?

Mike Hover
W. Lafayette IN

A. I'm glad you enjoyed my work, and to all the kind words I say thanks. As for getting copies of the Axis albums, just send me \$19.95 plus shipping and handling...

JUST KIDDING! Those albums are out of print now. You might find them at a record specialty shop.

My live bass drum sound is a combination of using very little muffling (a 14"x4"x1" piece of foam just slightly touching the head enough to eliminate the ring), hitting the bass drum hard for maximum tone and volume, and using an AKG D12 mic'. The tension on my snare head is fairly tight, and it gives me a lot of crack and response. I don't use Duraline heads anymore, because the manufacturer stopped making them. I am now using Aquarian Power Dot heads on all my drums. They're very strong, and they sound real fat and natural.

Dio is now in the process of writing for the next album. It's due out this fall, and will feature our new guitar player from England, Rowan Robertson.

RIKKI ROCKETT



Photo by Lissa Wales

Q. I recently had the chance to catch the Poison show in Houston. Your solo was absolutely remarkable! I thought I heard RotoToms; if so, what sizes did you use? I was also amazed with the symphonic sounds you used in your solo, and would like to know what you used to make them.

Corey Houston
Houston TX

A. Yes, you did hear Remo RotoToms, in 6", 8", and 10" sizes with CS Black Dot heads. I also used them on "Look But Don't Touch," from the Open Up And Say Ahh LP. You might also find it interesting that I played a set with my hands in a kind of shuffle pattern in the background of "Good Love" to simulate congas. When we were recording the song we decided to try a Latin percussion thing at about 3:00 in the

morning. But there were no congas available, so we taped up RotoToms to approximate the sound.

I think the "symphonic sounds" you mention are simply Latin Percussion timbales, with brass shells in sizes 8", 10", 12", and 14", with white batter heads. We have them miked internally with the May EA miking system. They do tend to sound more like timpani than standard timbales from out in the house. Or it may be that if you heard one of our very early shows, you heard some sounds I was playing around with that were triggered from pads. But I didn't use them that heavily, and I stopped using them altogether later on in the tour. Based on what you heard, take one or the other of these explanations as your answer, okay? Thanks for your questions, and keep rockin'!

DAVE WECKL

Q. What snare drum did you use on "Growing" and "Windsprint," from John Patitucci's recent solo album? How do you tune your brass piccolo snare? What's your head choice for that drum?

Mike Balistreri
Milwaukee WI

A. The snare used on all the cuts I played on was the Yamaha brass piccolo. The tuning I use depends on the particular piece of music to be played. On those two songs, it was what I would call a "normal" tuning: not real high, but not detuned in any way, either. On the first song, there was absolutely no muffling. On "Windsprint," there was a 1/2" strip of duct tape on the batter

head. I always use Remo coated Ambassadors for the batter and clear Ambassador snare-side heads. Thanks for writing!

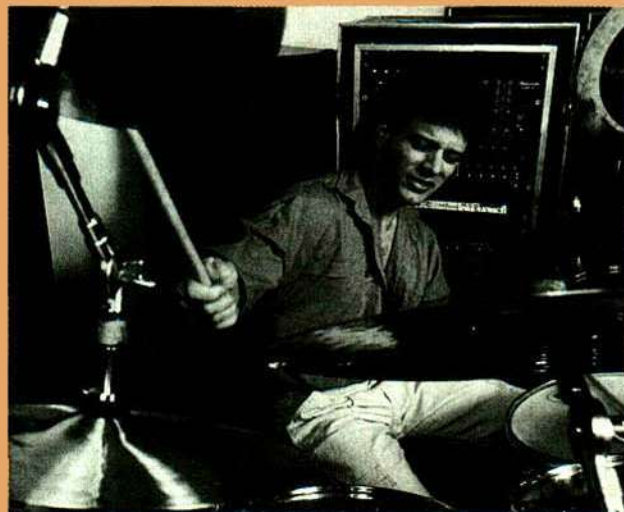


Photo by Jaeger Kotos

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IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Q. Would something like *Olde English Furniture Oil* be okay to use on wood-finished drums? How about something like *Pledge* furniture polish? Is there a possibility of damage to the drums?

P.V.

Shawnee OK

A. *Olde English Oil* is intended primarily to preserve and protect older wood surfaces that have lost some or all of their original finish. It is designed to penetrate the wood grain, replacing natural oils lost from the wood due to age. Since most wood-finished drums have a substantial lacquer or polymer finish on top of the actual wood, the *Olde English Oil* would probably not be able to penetrate to the wood below. As a result, you'd likely wind up with a fairly oily mess on the surface of your drum. It's also possible that the *Olde English Oil* might dissolve some older forms of lacquer finishes. So it would probably not be a good idea to use this particular product on your drums.

Pledge or similar spray dusting compounds are generally good for use on drums. Some contain wax, and some do not; be sure you know whether the product you plan to use does, because you'll want to use it sparingly to avoid waxy build-up on the shells. No matter what product you use, be sure to spray your cleaning cloth, rather than the drums themselves. This will avoid getting the product into cracks and crevices in and around the hardware, where it is almost impossible to remove.

Q. I have a clear acrylic Ludwig drumset. The floor tom has a crack in it. Will that affect the sound?

S.S.

Worthington OH

A. That depends primarily on where and how large the crack is. A large crack—especially one leading from a bearing edge—is likely to create minute vibrations, which could, in turn, cause a "buzz" in the shell. Such a crack could also interfere with proper seating of the drumhead.

Possibly more serious is the problem the crack might cause with the structural integrity of the drum. If it leads away from a screw hole where either a tuning lug or a leg-mounting bracket is installed, that area will be weakened. It is possible to use clear glues designed for use on acrylic plastics (usually polymer resin-based products) to seal up cracks. There's no way to make the glue job totally invisible, but if you are careful, it can be fairly inconspicuous. Luckily, with a floor tom, you can easily turn the drum so that the repaired area faces you, and not your audience.

Q. In the February '89 issue of *MD*, Peter Erskine makes a reference to his book, *Drum Concepts And Techniques*. He mentions that the book is published by 21st Century Music. Would you be so kind as to provide me with the full address of that publisher?

P.C.

Santiago, Chile

A. Peter's book is distributed by Hal Leonard Publishing Company, 8112 W. Bluemound Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53213.

Q. Since I play a double-bass setup, I have to settle for an "open" hi-hat sound. Does anyone make a hi-hat stand that locks the cymbals in order to achieve a "tight" or closed hi-hat sound?

M.M.

Scranton AR

A. Both *Drum Workshop* and *Yamaha* offer drop-lock clutches for hi-hats, which allow the top hi-hat cymbal to be quickly released and sit freely atop the bottom cymbal for "closed" playing. The "tightness" of that "closed sound" will depend primarily on the weight of that top cymbal. As far as we know, there is no device currently on the market that would facilitate a truly tight closed-hi-hat sound. (As a matter of fact, a hi-hat stand incorporating a locking pedal mechanism was the winner of *MD*'s "Dream Product" contest in October of 1986.) At present, your best alternative for a closed hi-hat sound would be a permanently closed auxiliary hi-hat, such as *Tama's X-Hat* or *Cosmic Percussion's Hat Rack*.

Q. I am looking for the brand name and possible address of the place that I can purchase a metronome like the one on the cover of *Master Studies*, by Joe Morello. I had a student several years ago who had one, but I no longer live in that city and do not know how to get in touch with him. The metronome worked very nicely; it was electrically operated, with a loud click sound and a light on top.

G.P.

Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada

A. That metronome is the *Franz Flash-Beat Wood* model. It is electric, features an on-off switch for the click sound, a lighted "jewel" on top that is visible in daylight, and a choice of mahogany or walnut case. You can contact the *Franz Manufacturing Company* at 240 Sargent Drive, New Haven, Connecticut 06511, (203) 562-0235, for further information.

Q. Where and when are these NAMM conventions you people talk about? Is there any planned for the St. Louis area? I'm very interested in attending if one should ever come around. How about other percussion conventions?

M.H.

Evansville IN

A. The NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) bi-annual shows are not conventions, but trade shows at which manufacturers and distributors display their products for retailers to view and order. The *Winter Market* is held each January in Anaheim, California, and the *Summer Expo* is held for two years in Chicago, and in some other location (generally in the Southeast) every third year. As they are now structured, the shows are not open to the general public. You must have some viable connection to the music business (as a store employee, member of the music press, etc.)—and be able to prove it—in order to gain access to the shows. For more information, contact NAMM, 5140 Avenida Encinas, Carlsbad, California 92008.

The most notable percussion-oriented annual convention is that of the *Percussive Arts Society (PAS)*. Generally held in November, this convention moves to a different city each year. (As a matter of fact, the 1987 convention was held in St. Louis.) The 1989 PAS convention will be held in Nashville, Tennessee. These conventions feature artists and educators in clinics, seminars, and master-class formats, as well as new product exhibits from manufacturers. There is a registration fee to attend, and you must also be a member of the PAS. For more information, contact the *Percussive Arts Society*, P.O. Box 697, Urbana, Illinois 61801-0697.

Q. I constantly read that touring is the most grueling—and sometimes boring—thing for band members. Is it really that bad? Drumming is one of the very few things I'm really good at, and I plan to construct the rest of my life around it. But if touring and recording is actually as grueling and boring as I read, I want to know so I can plan my life around another occupation.

M.B.

Mt. Pleasant PA

A. A great deal of the touring life led by successful drummers can be grueling: rough traveling schedules, lack of sleep, heavy physical demands, absence from loved ones, etc. And due to the repetitive nature of doing show after show—along with all the attending details that must be dealt with in each new city—a certain amount of boredom can set in. However, many artists experienced at touring take measures to avoid the boredom. (They read, sightsee, write, practice, shop, use hotel health facilities, etc.—anything to keep from laying around in a hotel room all day.) They also weigh the "grueling" demands against the emotional and financial benefits gained from the experience. If they feel they come out ahead, then they continue to tour. If they don't, they leave "the road" for other musical pursuits closer to home.



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Chris Frantz

Last fall, when Talking Heads drummer Chris Frantz and his wife/musical partner Tina Weymouth decided to play CBGB's, the legendary New York City club where the Heads first caught the attention of the rock world in the mid-'70s, they knew an awful lot of memories would surface—visions of the good as well as the bad. Flashbacks of the days when earning a few lousy bucks for a night's work was a major accomplishment. Yes, it is indeed sweet to return to your roots, your place of origin, when you come back a winner and a star. Or is it?

"Oh sure," smiles Frantz. "It's like the return of the conquering rock warriors." The statement amuses him, and he laughs.

But this critically acclaimed series of shows, performed to sell-out crowds on nights when the guest list was a mile long, had more riding on it than mere nostalgia. For one thing, this was not a Talking Heads gig. Nor did Tina and Chris simply sit in as guests of another band. They were up there on that weary stage as leaders of their own band—the Tom Tom Club. Now, TTC itself was not news; the "Tom Tom Club concept," after all, had been in existence since 1980. What made the CBGB's gigs special was their nature: They marked the first time the Tom Tom Club had ever performed live. There was Chris and Tina and the rest of the Tom Tom Club in the joint that launched a thousand bands, playing tunes off the Tom Tom Club's third album, *Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom*, in front of an audience of real, sweaty, dancing, breathing people.

"We were very nervous and very excited at the same time," recalls Frantz, who's sitting in his manager's office in midtown Manhattan a few months later. "Those shows were a big deal for all the right reasons."

Despite the Tom Tom Club's lack of stage experience, the shows were an across-the-board success. TTC performed with a drive and near-diligious enthusiasm of a band out to prove a few things to its

fans—and itself. "We put a lot into the shows, because a lot was riding on them," continues Frantz in his typically careful, cheerful tone. "And we got a lot out of them. The best thing about the shows was being on stage again. It had been such a long time, and it felt so good."

With Talking Heads primarily a studio band these days—thanks mostly to David Byrne's reluctance to tour and his seemingly myriad other interests—the Tom Tom Club has become Chris and Tina's sole vehicle for performing live. TTC also allows the duo to explore musical themes untouched by Byrne.

"Because of this, we're real serious about the Tom Tom Club," continues Frantz. "Some people used to see the group as just a fun little thing, a little project with little consequence. Actually Tina and I are as serious about the Tom Tom Club as we are about Talking Heads."

Frantz is also serious about his drumming. He has been ever since his days at the Rhode Island School of Design where he, Tina, and Byrne decided to start a group. But over the years it's been an easygoing kind of seriousness. As a drummer, Frantz hasn't quite set the world afire with technical acumen or daring, innovative drum ideas: "I hope there aren't that many typical Modern Drummer kind of questions in this interview," he says between laughs. "I'm afraid I won't be able to answer many of them."

But he has made his mark nonetheless. His rhythmic feel is frequently the rhythmic feel of Talking Heads—despite Byrne's indomitable presence. And no doubt most of the rhythms heard on the Tom Tom Club's latest LP originated with Frantz. There's also a subtle finesse and funky endeavor that are woven into Frantz's drumming. They rarely jump out at the listener, it's true, but they're present in a sly sort of way, and they're tasty.



Photo by Ebet Roberts

By Robert Santelli

How then should one describe Frantz behind a drumset? A powerhouse stylist? No. A clever drummer who knows which beats should go where, and why? Yes. "I'm no slugger," says Frantz. "The groove is the thing with me. I've always based my drumming on capturing the groove. I guess that comes from listening to so many James Brown records."

Chris Frantz, as it turns out, is an easy interview. He is not afraid to speak his mind, and his manner is warm and witty. He also has a lot to talk about.

RS: How is *Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom* different from the two previous Tom Tom Club albums?

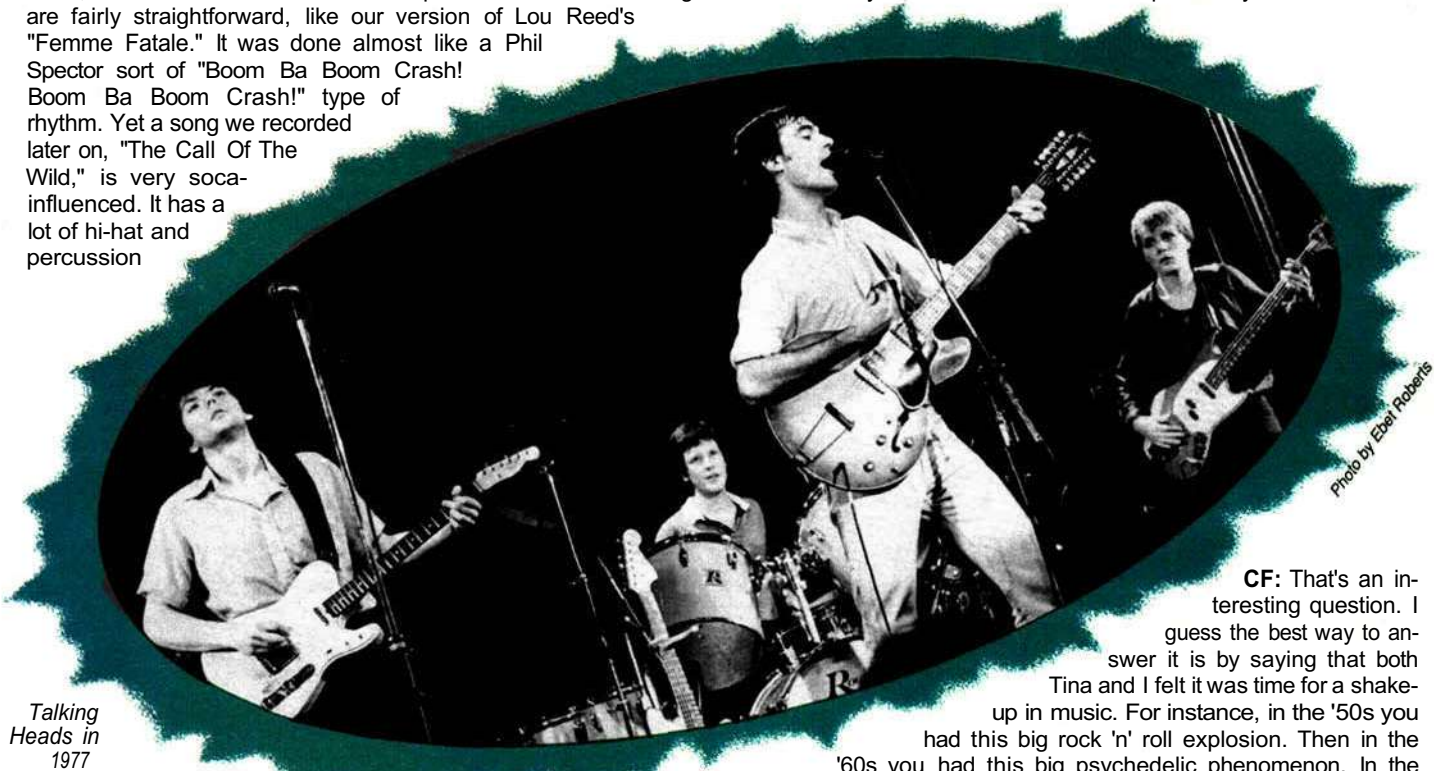
CF: We worked on this record for over two years, believe it or not. It was done between Talking Heads records and having babies and things like that. [Chris and Tina have two daughters, Robin, six, and Egan, two.] So the album took a long time to finish, but only because we weren't able to do the whole thing in one fell swoop.

As you probably know, the album was first released in Europe. Then we decided to record three new tracks for the American version. It's interesting because when one takes two years to complete an album, one runs into a lot of ideas, like rhythmic ideas, and a lot of different kinds of inspiration. Some of the songs are fairly straightforward, like our version of Lou Reed's "Femme Fatale." It was done almost like a Phil Spector sort of "Boom Ba Boom Crash! Boom Ba Boom Crash!" type of rhythm. Yet a song we recorded later on, "The Call Of The Wild," is very soca-influenced. It has a lot of hi-hat and percussion

rhythms. I guess I expected lots of high energy dance tracks, since that's what the Tom Tom Club is essentially known for.

CF: Well, we like to use the word "darker" rather than "subdued." But, yeah, I can see where you might see the songs as somewhat subdued. We were going through a period where we thought we didn't want to be just a dance band. Then we got to thinking, "What's so bad about being just a dance band?" You know, it's not that easy to make a good dance record. I think some people figure you can just crank out a dance record. Sure, some artists and bands admittedly do just crank them out. But the Tom Tom Club isn't such a band. And *Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom* certainly isn't such a record. There's a lot of time and consideration that goes into all our songs, be they dance tunes or ballads. But some of the songs this time out, to get back to your original point, are a bit low-key or restrained and are maybe a little on the morose side. It was just the way we were feeling. Some days you wake up and you feel like dancing. Other days you wake up and you feel like, I don't know, maybe whacking the person next to you. [laughs] On *Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom* it was our intention to express a whole range of feelings and musical sounds, including those less bright. I don't know if we were 100% successful or not, but we gave it a real good try. And I guess that's what counts in the end.

RS: But why would "dark" feelings come out on this record? There are those who feel the music you make is a reflection of your day-to-day experiences, or, at least, your perceived day-to-day experiences. Should Chris Frantz fans assume that there were dark stretches in your and Tina's life over the past two years?



Talking Heads in 1977

and is very dance-oriented. So there's a real mixed bag of rhythms on *Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom*. It's the result of the time we took to make it and the various influences that struck us along the way. In no way is it a standard rock 'n' roll record.

RS: Why did you record three new songs for the American release of the album?

CF: It was mostly a business decision. Our American record company felt that since *Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom* had come out in Europe so far in advance of when the record was going to be available in America, some of our fans had probably purchased *Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom* as an import. We all agreed that we needed to make the American release a bit different, and that's what we did.

RS: When I first heard *Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom*, I was struck by the, shall we say, subdued quality of some of the songs and

CF: That's an interesting question. I guess the best way to answer it is by saying that both Tina and I felt it was time for a shake-up in music. For instance, in the '50s you had this big rock 'n' roll explosion. Then in the '60s you had this big psychedelic phenomenon. In the '70s there was punk and so-called new wave. Now it's the '80s—the tail end of the '80s—and we think that music is very overdue for some significant changes. We were trying to find something different that might help bring on those changes. We felt free to experiment and to see what might happen, and that, essentially, is what we did.

We certainly don't claim that there are any earth-shattering explosions on *Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom* in terms of new music and rhythms. But we definitely wanted to leave ourselves open to them in case they accidentally happened. [laughs] I think we're getting somewhere slowly but surely. Tina and I both feel that music has gotten pretty predictable and kind of cute these days. Admittedly, there are a lot of people out there writing good songs. There are also a lot of drummers out there who are exploring different rhythms and means of rhythms, and the results are delightful. But on the whole, the contemporary music scene is not

real exciting. When we did *Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom* we were looking for a little excitement in our music and, in some way, the key to passing on that excitement to other people. I think the bottom line is that rock 'n' roll is really overdue for something that is a bit, I don't know, drastic.

RS: That's interesting. But from strictly a drummer's point of view, don't you think that the '80s has been a pretty important decade?

like perhaps they used to. I hear drummers today who play and sound like drum machines. I've checked out Rolling Stones songs recorded before the use of drum machines, and a lot of them speed up and slow down quite a bit. But if you listen to more recent Stones tunes, a lot of them stay with the same tempo. So it's pretty obvious that the drum machine has had a significant effect on rock 'n' roll.

RS: What kind of drum machine do you fancy?

CF: My first one was an Oberheim *DMX*. Then I had a Linn 9000. But, unfortunately, one of my engineers took it down to Jamaica and it was never returned to me. Now I have an Alesis, which I love

Photo by Ebel Roberts

Tom Tom Club at CBGB's in 1988, with Lou Reed (far left) sitting in.

After all, the rock drummer has finally gotten away from the tired, stereotyped role of just being the guy in the back of the band. More drummers are writing and producing. You're a perfect example of that. Drummers are becoming stars in their own right. And then there's the new drum technology and the unlimited possibilities of drum machines and such. Don't you think drummers like yourself are contributing more to music than ever before?

CF: Well, there have been a lot of changes in terms of drummers, it's true. With all the new technology that's available today, drummers can express themselves more. Drummers are writing more and getting more involved. I know for me, just keeping the beat in a band wasn't all that interesting. After you get past a certain point, it's not so much your drumming skills that require a lot of work, it's more about conception and thinking up new beats, new sounds. Sure, you have to keep up with your chops and all that. But the challenge is to be exciting and interesting. Of course, too, it's one thing to be real experimental, but it's another to be real experimental and have people like what they're hearing.

RS: Like it enough to buy it.

CF: Exactly. The Tom Tom Club never really stressed the commercial aspect too much. But let's face it, if we didn't have a few hits, or a few minor hits, then we wouldn't be able to continue doing what we're doing. That's the way it goes. From my point of view, I've always tried to be aware of the business of making records. I mean, I even took piano lessons so I could figure out what the guitar players and keyboard players were saying to each other in the studio. [laughs] Now I know the difference between a G and a G-minor. For a long time I didn't have the faintest idea what they were talking about. I've even gotten involved with drum machines. I think they're great. Mostly I use one for writing. It's great to lock into a particular tempo. I use my drum machine like a click or metronome. And I have to say, I've even used the drum machine on a song or two. It's a pretty versatile invention.

RS: Despite what you just said, it doesn't seem that the techno explosion of the '80s has affected you or what you do on stage and in the studio like it has other drummers.

CF: I think the drum machine has made me more aware of timing, the way it has made other drummers more aware. Because of drum machines, some drummers don't speed up or slow down

because it's so good and so small, and it sounds absolutely great.

RS: How many rhythm tracks on *Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom* have drum machine textures incorporated into them?

CF: A couple of the songs do. On most of the songs you hear me and my old Rogers drumkit. Three or four songs are entirely drum machine, or a combination of the drum machine and real drums.

RS: Could you identify the songs?

CF: Let's see if I can remember: "Suboceana," "Shock The World," "She Belongs To Me," which is the Bob Dylan song we covered, and "Challenge Of The Love Warriors." On "Love Warriors" you hear a Linn 9000 with some real percussion on top. You know, there's been this whole thing about anyone being able to program drum machines. But I really believe drummers program much better than non-drummers. I can't get that go-go beat going on real drums. Try as I might, I just can't get it down. But on a drum machine I can go crazy with it. I know it's a cliché, but the drum machine is a tool. How you use it determines if the results are worthwhile or not.

RS: I don't recall much in the way of drum machines on Talking Heads albums.

CF: You're right. I don't think we've used a drum machine on any Talking Heads songs. There was, though, one song I used a drum machine for, but it never made it onto an album. It had one of those impossible-to-play drumbeats. No one knows the song so it's not even worth talking about.

RS: Ever since the advent of the Tom Tom Club, fans and critics alike have viewed the group as your and Tina's alter-ego. The Tom Tom Club, it seemed, was the place where you two could really elaborate on your own musical ideas, without the influence of David Byrne or the confines of what Talking Heads has come to symbolize, musically. Do you see the Tom Tom Club in this way?

CF: I guess to a certain extent that has to be true. The public perceives Talking Heads as being dominated by David because he's a compelling figure, and onstage he's a great performer. But when it comes down to actually writing the songs, it really is a

team effort. Then, of course, David puts his lyrics on afterwards and tries to make up a melody which, more often than not, is based on what's already there. I always felt that within Talking Heads I was able to be as creative as humanly possible. I never thought that my part in the band was limited. Just listen to the records. You can tell that it's not just another rock group grinding out generic sounds and rhythms.

RS: Is it safe to assume then that all the media attention that is heaped on David doesn't bother you?

CF: What was frustrating was that David would enter into solo projects or projects outside of Talking Heads, and the rest of us would be left with nothing to do. Now that was pretty damn frustrating. That's why the Tom Tom Club came into existence—not because Tina and I felt limited or restricted by Talking Heads. If Talking Heads is only busy six out of every eighteen months, what can you expect? What were we supposed to do for the other year, you know? Let me tell you, sometimes it isn't that easy being in two bands. If it's twice as much fun, it's also twice as many headaches. But we're doing our best.

RS: I understand that David wasn't interested in touring to promote *Naked*. Does a decision such as that automatically mean you and Tina will initiate a Tom Tom Club project?

CF: Pretty much so. It's a natural thing, I guess.

RS: Are there any plans to begin work on a new Talking Heads record soon?

CF: We'll probably go into the studio in the fall. But I can't really say if we'll tour once the record is finished and out in record stores. I just don't know.

RS: The Tom Tom Club and Talking Heads aren't the only things that consume your time. You've been pretty busy—and pretty successful, I might add—as Ziggy Marley's producer.

CF: I don't know if you know this, but "Tumblin' Down" is the number-one black single in America this week. So you're talking to the number-one black producer in America, [laughs] I'm kind of proud of that, actually. And so is my wife. We made it to number two before with "Genius Of Love." We never could knock Stevie Wonder out of the number-one slot. So this week we're number one, or rather Ziggy is. And Michael Jackson is number two.

RS: What was it like working with Ziggy Marley? I know you had to step into Alex Sadkin's shoes at a very disturbing moment. [Sadkin was killed in an automobile accident in Jamaica just before the project got under way.]

CF: We knew Alex a lot better than Ziggy did. Alex worked with Ziggy's father [Bob Marley]; that was the reason he was chosen to work with Ziggy. Alex had worked with us on *Speaking In Tongues*. We were also his neighbors down in Compass Point, Chris Blackwell's studio complex in the Bahamas. We lived in the same building as Alex. So we knew him pretty well. It was strange to take over his role in the project, but I thought Tina and I could do a really good job.

In the beginning, though, Ziggy wasn't quite sure about us. I don't think he'd ever heard of us before. We had to have several meetings with him. Eventually he said okay to us producing the record. It did take a while for things to get going. It was awkward

at first, we being white and Tina being female, and us working with Rastas. It's not something that happens every day, let's face it. But it was clear to me halfway through the first day that everything was going to work out just fine. Everyone came to work. It was really great. Everyone was always right on time for the sessions.

RS: That's rarely the case with Jamaican Rastas.

CF: Well, the Rastas we worked with are actually Ethiopians, which is a little bit different than being Jamaican. But they love reggae music. It was clear from the first day, once everyone got over their shyness and wondering what everyone else was really like, that everything was really going to be fine. Ziggy's not a big talker. He expresses himself in his songs very well, but as

far as any other type of conversation goes, it's fairly limited. I can only tell you that, to me, the songs came out sounding really great. It was mostly due to Ziggy and the band; it wasn't due to any real talking about it.

RS: How much of *Conscious Party* reflects the musical ideas of you and Tina?

CF: Our idea was that the record should be recorded live, because we felt that live reggae bands usually sounded big and exciting, whereas on record they often sounded very small and not that exciting. So our idea was to make them like we would a rock band—you know, with a lot of ambiance. We had mic's out in the hall with the doors open. We also had everybody play ensemble. A lot of times in reggae the rhythm section will cut and then everything else is overdubbed so they can get separation on everything. We weren't interested in making a real "dub wise" record. We wanted the musicians to sound like a band. So that's what we did.

We also brought in some people like Lenny Pickett and Jerry Harrison to do something a little unpredictable. Our job was to make sure that the best stuff got onto tape and that the guys got treated with respect and didn't feel that they had to rush through the sessions, which is often the case in Jamaica. Everything gets rushed through the studios down there because of financial limitations. We wanted the musicians to know that if it took all day to get something right, that was fine. More often than not we would get three takes a day. Ordinarily in that same time they would have been expected to get a dozen takes. So we were able to do something over and over again until we were sure that everybody was happy. It was a delightful experience, I can tell you.

RS: Will you and Tina produce the follow-up LP to *Conscious Party*?

CF: Yes, we will.

RS: Have you begun preparations for it?

CF: Well, Ziggy and his people don't want to do the new record in New York. It got a little too cold for them the last time. I would love to go to Compass Point and work on the album there, but I'm not sure that will be possible. We're looking at Montserrat in the Caribbean, and if worst comes to worst, Los Angeles. Ziggy needs a big room so that we can record the band all at once. He also needs something better, technically speaking, than his own studio, Tuff Gong, down in Kingston, Jamaica.

RS: With the success you've experienced in the studio, both with Ziggy Marley and the Tom Tom Club, are you beginning to see



Photo by Edsel Roberts

continued on page 52



Talking Drums

The following examples demonstrate Chris Franz's playing on some of the more popular Talking Heads tunes, as well as a few tracks from the new Tom Tom Club album. One thing you'll notice right away is the simplicity of these beats—yet Chris applies them in his own unique way. When listening to these beats within the context of the songs, you can hear Chris's two main talents: his ability to come up with the right beat for the song, and his ability to just sit on a beat, never letting anything get in the way of the groove. Examples 1 through 6 are Chris with the Talking Heads, and 7 and 8 are with the Tom Tom Club.

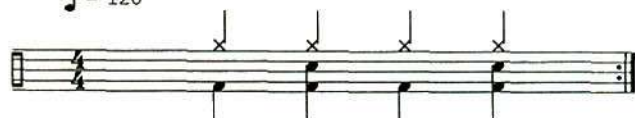
1. "Psycho Killer"

Talking Heads '77 (Sire SR-6036)

This first example shows the driving beats Chris played for both the verse and chorus sections.

Verse

$\text{♩} = 120$



Chorus

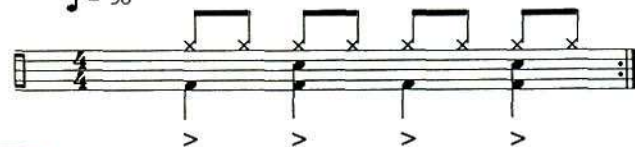


2. "Take Me To The River"

More Songs About Buildings And Food (Sire SRK-6058)

Here's a simple beat that gives a strong "four feel" to the song. The interesting item about this beat is the snare drum sound, which has a sweeping pitch bend to it.

$\text{♩} = 98$

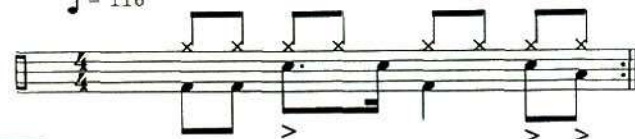


3. "Once In A Lifetime"

Remain In Light (Sire SRK-6095)

This pattern shows Chris's ability to sit on a groove for almost an entire track, propelling the song without getting in the way.

$\text{♩} = 116$

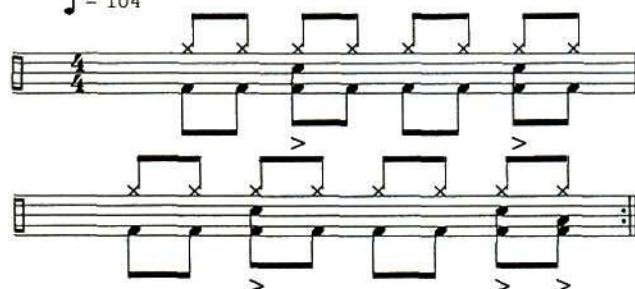


4. "Burning Down The House"

Speaking In Tongues (Sire 23883-1)

The following two-bar phrase that Chris played on this track is the foundation for the whole tune. This is the track with all of those great-sounding overdubbed tom parts.

$\text{♩} = 104$

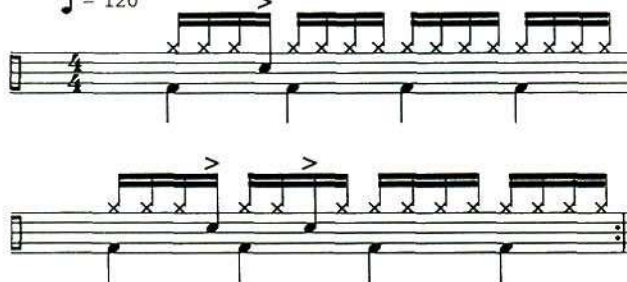


5. "(Nothing But) Flowers"

Naked (Sire 25654-1)

This two-bar pattern implies a Latin feel, with the bass drum being the focal point of the beat.

$\text{♩} = 120$



6. "Ruby Dear"

Naked

In this example Chris plays a variation of the classic Bo Diddley beat.

$\text{♩} = 112$

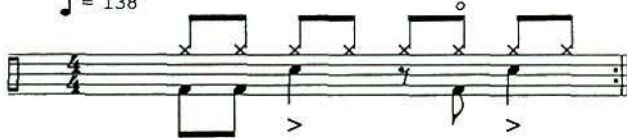


7. "Kiss Me"

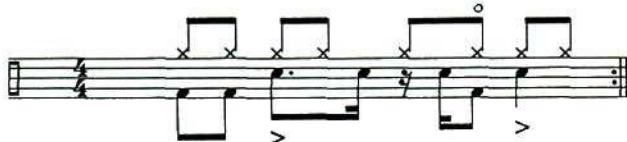
Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom (Sire 4-25888)

Here's a good example of one of Chris's strong points. On this track, he plays the first pattern for most of the track, and then he adds a slight variation to the pattern. Since he's been keeping the beat simple, when Chris comes in with the variation, it has a great deal more impact than if he had been embellishing on the basic beat earlier on.

$\text{♩} = 138$



Variation

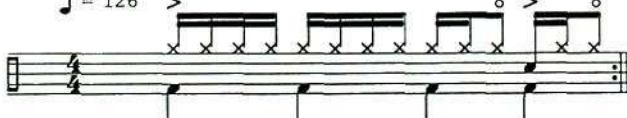


8. "Call Of The Wild"

Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom

In this last example, Chris plays a very dance-oriented pattern with the emphasis on beat 4 of the pattern.

$\text{♩} = 126$



Scott Rockenfield

In the all-too-fertile ground that often sprouts one heavy metal clone after another, Queensryche stands alone, distinctively unique in message and music. Straddling the fence between progressive rock and heavy metal, Queensryche have proven to be much more than an explosion of drums and a gust of disheveled guitar screams. The music is drawn from dramatic, not-so-catchy melodies that elicit mental images for the lyrics—passionate pleas for social change and the struggle of the human condition. Queensryche is pretty heady stuff, and on all of their releases over the past six years—Queensryche, The Warning, Rage For Order, and Operation: Mindcrime—the band has managed to reinvent their sound on each record, without compromise to their overall style.

When the group took root in Seattle, Washington in the early '80s, they discovered a teenager named Scott Rockenfield and invited him to occupy the drum throne. Over the course of the band's lifespan, Scott has literally grown up—personally and musically. The band has grown as well, and just as the complexity of their efforts has become more ambitious, Scott's playing has developed the technical acumen to meet the challenges. His clean and compelling expression has connected with fans and fellow drummers.

Last year's Operation: Mindcrime transported the listener to a new place. With themes based on an Orwellian nightmare, Mindcrime is a concept album composed of 75 mini-suites that are inextricably linked together. The architecture of the music evokes the eeriness and isolation of the lyrics, while the drumming serves not only as a rhythmic catalyst but also a strongly melodic one.



Metal Dynamics

by Teri Saccone



TS: To begin with, what's the extent of your musical training?

SR: I had about six months of snare drum training while I was in the sixth grade. But I quit because I thought it was boring. My parents bought me a kit for Christmas about a year after that, and then I just took it from there.

TS: Since you started in your first professional band—which happens to have been Queensryche—when you were a teenager, you must have pushed yourself hard to get so far so quickly. I get the feeling from listening to you that it was practice, practice, practice in the early days.

SR: I really did practice constantly. It was the first thing I did when I came home from school every day, even in high school.

TS: Had you always visualized yourself as being a drummer?

SR: I had always been attracted to the drums when I listened to music, so it was the obvious way to go. And my parents were nice enough to help me along the way.

TS: Was it a struggle to figure out how to play a kit?

SR: Oh yeah. Nothing made sense in the beginning, and it was the typical banging away on the kit. I would sit there with headphones on, listening to other bands. That's how I taught myself.

TS: I guess Neil Peart made an impression?

SR: Yeah, he was a big influence. Not that I could play Neil Peart licks right off the bat. But it wasn't really just Peart who influenced me, it was the whole band—Rush as a unit. If one person can play a certain way, the whole band has got to be able to follow the music and *everybody* has got to understand different time signatures and things like that. I was really intrigued by Rush's music when they first started. Peart's playing was so precise yet so radical at the same time.

The collaboration of musicians who were playing out of the mainstream was what primarily inspired me. Yes was also a band who influenced me, especially their later stuff, like *90125* and *Big Generator*, which had some really cool melodies and high-tech production.

I'm into all kinds of music, stuff that I think is interesting to listen to that has something more to it than basic rock 'n' roll. I actually listen to a lot of new age music; Vangelis is one of my favorite artists. It's very atmospheric music. I also like The Sisters of Mercy, even though it's a band without an actual drummer; they use a drum machine. I like rhythm-conscious music that doesn't necessarily find its rhythms in the percussion—like new age music and some soundtrack releases.

TS: I know that you use click tracks in the studio, but I wonder how you learned to duplicate the exact sounds, odd times, and flawless rhythms live. It sounds exactly like the albums.

SR: You get to the point of knowing the material so well that it becomes second nature. For instance, we've been playing the material for the current album for close



Photo by Mark Weiss

to two years, using a click track on them. For half the songs live, I actually use a click track through the headphones because, instead of having a keyboard player on the road, we have our keyboards programmed. A lot of bands are doing it this way these days. The keyboard parts happen in time to the click. I do that on four songs right now: "Revolution Calling," "Speak," "Spreading The Disease," and "Eyes Of A Stranger."

TS: I guess you are triggering throughout your live set.

SR: No, I'm not.

TS: You're not using samples?

SR: Nothing. It's just acoustic drums.

TS: But you've got all kinds of sounds—explosions, shotguns, etc. The only sounds that seem natural when you play live are the bass drums. You must be using some synthetic device.

SR: No, really. It's just the way we mixed things on the different sounds. It's all straightforward. I mean, we've got some effects on things, but nothing's sampled or triggered.

TS: What are you using for effects?

SR: It's pretty much a *PCM-70* with special reverb patches. I can't reveal any of our special effects, though.

TS: Queensryche is one of the few bands that captures the perfection of the studio within the realm of live performing.

SR: We've always strived to be that way. We work with our soundman to get the right reverb patches. That's about all there is to it except for the gates, which are dialed in very precisely—pretty much standard operation these days. Tuning has a lot to do with it, and the cool reverb patches I have on it. Of course, the way I play it is going to come across differently than the next person.

TS: Before *Operation: Mindcrime*, had you always maintained the objective of repli-

cating the studio sound in a live context?

SR: That was everyone's objective. We always had the rule of no limits in the studio; we could do anything we wanted to do. We have four guys who can sing—that's minus me—and that helps with back-ups live. [Vocalist] Geoff [Tate] can do anything singing and harmony-wise, as long as it could be pulled off live. We wanted to play it better or at the least as good live when we said "no limits in the studio." And it's paid off. A lot of people have commented on our live sound, saying that it is as good if not better than the record. In the studio, we didn't trigger anything; it's all straight-ahead. We recorded in a room that was the size of a racquetball court—30-foot high ceilings by 20 feet long.

TS: Great ambience.

SR: Oh yeah, it was great. And we stuck about eight room mic's over different parts of the ceiling for different reverb sounds. It only took us three hours to get the drum sound for the record; I was recording within three hours of setting up. We just slapped up the mic's and started going for it. It's really weird, because in the past it's taken weeks to get certain sounds.

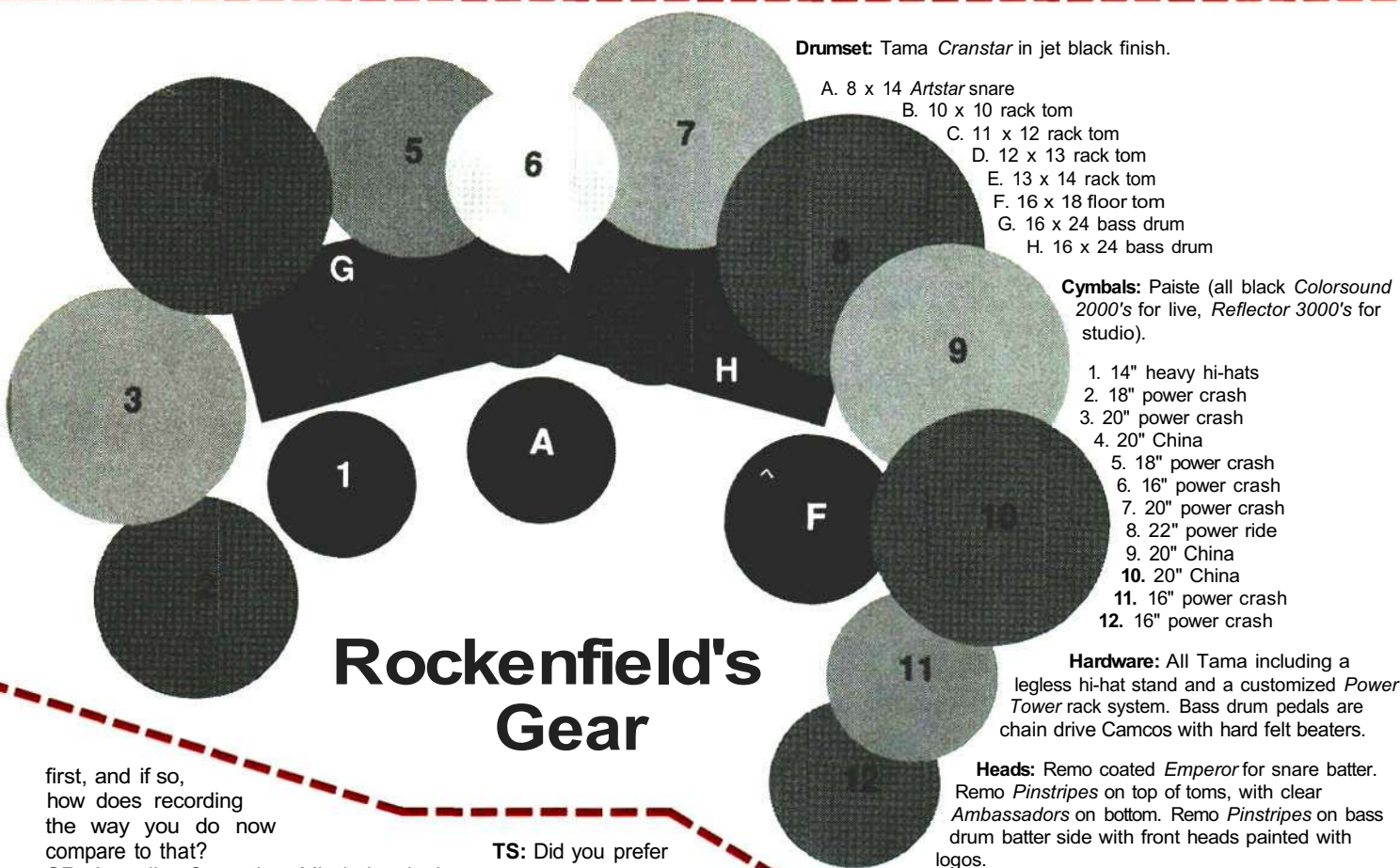
TS: It wouldn't seem as if your albums begin by laying the drum tracks down first.

SR: Actually, we program all the keyboard parts to a click track in the studio first. We have a computer that runs all of those parts.

TS: Do you do any of that programming yourself?

SR: For the songs that I wrote, I programmed the keyboard parts. For Geoff's songs, he did his own. He plays keyboards during the show. We just programmed them in at the beginning, but you can keep going back there, stacking different things in the computer. So the keyboards go down first, and I play my drum tracks over that.

TS: Have you ever recorded the drum tracks



Rockenfield's Gear

first, and if so, how does recording the way you do now compare to that?

SR: Actually, *Operation: Mindcrime* is the first album that we've ever done where we've put the keyboard tracks down first. That's because our producer and engineer—Peter Collins and James Barton—worked like this in the past, with bands like Rush. Programming all the keyboard parts with the click track saves time later. That's the primary benefit of doing it first. I like doing it first because it gives me more music to play to when I'm doing my tracks.

On the other albums, we always did the drum tracks first, just to guide the guitars and vocals, but I find it much better to lay down my tracks to a keyboard. It also gives the guide tracks more thickness, more depth.

TS: The whole band writes the material for Queensryche, including you. Do you write melodies for songs on keyboards?

SR: I do develop melodies on keyboards, and a number that I can give as an example is "Electric Requiem," from the latest album. When I wrote it, it originally started out just as a short instrumental piece. Then Jeff heard it and liked it a lot, and although it wasn't devised to have vocals on it, he came up with some, and then we just expanded the whole piece.

TS: In comparison to some drummers, you utilize a relatively conservative number of drum tracks to record.

SR: Well, I use 12 to 15—at least this time I did—that's nine for close-miking the kit and five or six overheads. Some bands feel they need ten times that amount to get the sound they want. We didn't feel a need for that. We recorded everything digitally, too.

TS: Did you prefer digital to analog recording?

SR: Yeah, this was the first time we ever did it digitally. We've mixed digitally before; that's how we mixed *Rage*. For *Mindcrime* we did everything digitally: recording, mixing, mastering. It's really expensive, but we feel it's definitely worth the difference for us. That's what our band is about—hi-tech.

TS: Are you really into recording technology?

SR: Very much. In fact, I can't wait to get off the road. I love playing live, but I really like to spend time developing ideas in the studio.

TS: I'll bet that you have your own studio at home.

SR: In my basement—actually, in my parents' basement. We tore down walls and put in a control room. I have lots of gear; that's what I spend my money on—equipment. I even have a mini-studio on the road with me.

TS: What does that consist of?

SR: I have an Alesis *HR 16* drum machine, a four-track Tascam recorder, a couple of multiple effects machines, a rack-mount JVC tape deck, and I also have an Alesis *MMT-8* eight-track sequencer. I have a Roland *S-50* sampling keyboard with me as well, which I use to do my writing with. We've also got a *Juno 106*. My whole setup is portable; it all fits into one case, except for the keyboards, which are the ones that we use on stage. But I'll bring them into the room with me when I want to use them for writing.

Drumset: Tama *Cranstar* in jet black finish.

- A. 8 x 14 *Artstar* snare
- B. 10 x 10 rack tom
- C. 11 x 12 rack tom
- D. 12 x 13 rack tom
- E. 13 x 14 rack tom
- F. 16 x 18 floor tom
- G. 16 x 24 bass drum
- H. 16 x 24 bass drum

Cymbals: Paiste (all black *Colorsound 2000's* for live, *Reflector 3000's* for studio).

- 1. 14" heavy hi-hats
- 2. 18" power crash
- 3. 20" power crash
- 4. 20" China
- 5. 18" power crash
- 6. 16" power crash
- 7. 20" power crash
- 8. 22" power ride
- 9. 20" China
- 10. 20" China
- 11. 16" power crash
- 12. 16" power crash

Hardware: All Tama including a legless hi-hat stand and a customized *Power Tower* rack system. Bass drum pedals are chain drive Camcos with hard felt beaters.

Heads: Remo coated *Emperor* for snare batter. Remo *Pinstripes* on top of toms, with clear *Ambassadors* on bottom. Remo *Pinstripes* on bass drum batter side with front heads painted with logos.

Sticks: Tama *Power Tool #4* model with nylon tip.

TS: Although you make it look easy, *Operation: Mindcrime* consists of songs that are not structured in standard form. The tracks weave into each other fluidly, but there are a lot of complex changes and rhythms contained on it. On "Revolution Calling," for instance, you play a pretty elaborate drum break with some wild time signatures, after starting it out in 4/4. The song goes full circle and ends in 4/4. Did you write that one around the drums, given the emphasis it has on the rhythms?

SR: We actually put that song together as a band. Usually, somebody comes in with a guitar riff or an idea for a verse or a chorus, and we'll all sit down and brainstorm and just play until we have a song. That's how most of the songs on the album came about. In fact, that's how "Revolution Calling" was done: We all had a part in brainstorming the shape of that song.

TS: Do you go into the rehearsal or recording studio with snippets of ideas, or is it all worked out well in advance?

SR: We go into pre-production with the songs already written. With this album, everything was written beforehand, and then we went into pre-production with Peter Collins, who changed almost nothing; he basically kept things the way they were. His goal in the beginning was to let us do it our way. We wouldn't have allowed it to

continued on page 70

Sol Gubin

They say the span of a session player's career runs its course in about eight years, maybe ten if he's lucky. Sol Gubin's recording career has spanned three and a half decades—35 years! Admittedly he's not as busy as he used to be, but he still gets calls, like the recent TV epic *War*

And Remembrance, or record dates with the likes of Melissa Manchester or Michael Feinstein, or even road work with Julie Andrews. Suffice it to say that at 60, Sol

Gubin is going strong.

Not as strong as he'd like, though. It's a source of frustration when work lessens for a vital man who is used to being incredibly busy. Sol's career started in the mid-'40s, working with such bands as Hal McIntyre, Tex Beneke, Charlie Barnett,

and Sonny Dunham.

From 1954 to 1970, Sol was a first-call musician in New York, playing live and/or in the studio with Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra, Vic Damone, Lena Home, Edie Gorme, Steve Lawrence, Stan Kenton, Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Perry Como, Johnny Mathis, Robert Goulet, Leonard Bernstein, Quincy Jones, Dusty Springfield, Barbra Streisand, Martha Raye, and Patti Page. Later, he played on Bob Hope specials, George Burns birthday shows, the Tony Awards, the Emmy Awards, the Academy Awards, *M*A*S*H*, *Barney Miller*, *Bob Newhart*, the Olympics Liberty Weekend, with Liza Minnelli, Bernadette Peters, Diahann Carroll, and

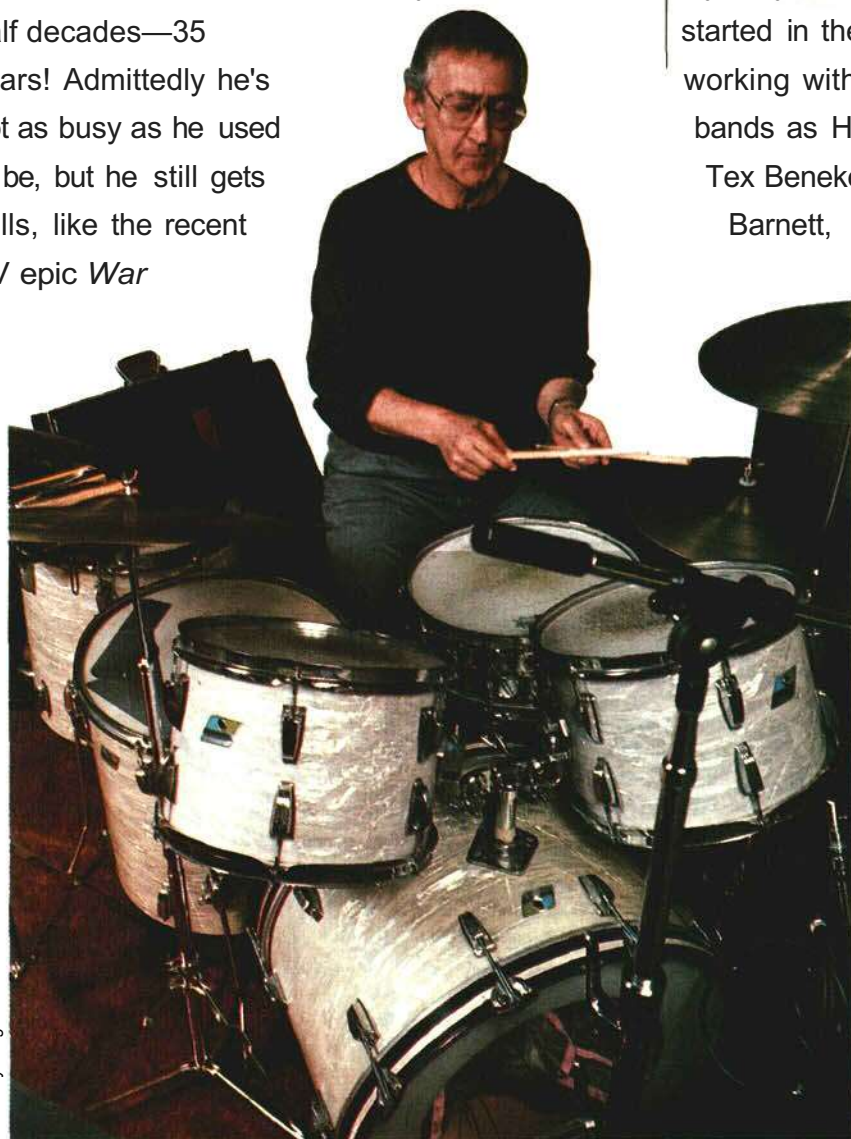


Photo by Jaeger Kolos



by Robyn Flans

bly musical," "tonality," "originality," and "unbelievable time." He also mentioned that Sol was known to be one of Buddy Rich's favorite drummers.

Interestingly enough, like Rich, Sol earned a reputation for being a no-nonsense, no bull-shit kind of guy. He says there are people who can't handle his blunt honesty, but that his sense of humor has bailed him out of a few uncomfortable spots along the way. But it's not political games that Sol enjoys playing, it's only good music that he wants to play.

Photo by Jaeger Kados

Al Hirt, and on countless movies such as *Annie*, *New York, New York*, and all of Mel Brooks' films.

Sol moved to California in 1970 and for seven years came into the living rooms of

multitudes of people every week as the drummer on *The Carol Burnett Show*. One such living room was Jim Keltner's. Jim helped put this interview together due to his admiration and

respect for Sol, which had begun with the Burnett show, and he even accompanied me on my first meeting with Sol. His comments about Sol's playing ranged from "fearless" to "incredi-

Although he attended Juilliard to help him with music theory and to aid in his compositional skills, Sol is primarily self-taught in drums and percussion, including mallets. It's been his experiences,



SG: When I was with Sonny Dunham, we worked at the State Theater in Connecticut for two days, and Patti Page happened to be on the show. Her manager asked if I would be interested in going on the road with her and I told him that I would love to do it. I didn't hear from him for about a year, but when he called, I took the job and traveled with Patti for a couple of years. That was my first experience of going on the road with

a singer, which was a much better way of life. We stayed in better hotels, and we worked a week or two at the same place.

Then one thing lead to another. I left her and went to Hal McIntyre's band, and then I went back home for a while. I got a call to go with Charlie Barnett, who I stayed with for about three and a half years. I caught the tail end of the '49 band, which was a super, super band. Then he broke the band up and

went down to Miami Beach to work with Martha Raye at her club, but he took a sextet down there. I didn't want to go, so I went back home, but the next thing I knew, I got a call from him. The guy just wasn't making it, and he needed a drummer, so I said okay. I went down, watched the show one night, and started the next day. From that night on, I have worked with Martha. We're like family. Then after

that, they closed the club, and Martha came back to New York and had her own television show, an hour live show on NBC.

RF: Was that the first TV show you did?

SG: Yes. They set up an appointment with the conductor, and I had lunch with him and we talked. Naturally he had his own guy that he wanted to use, but for Martha he said he'd give me a shot at it.

RF: What was a day in the life of doing a live show like?

SG: We'd go in the day before and have a music run-through for about three or four hours, and then the next day we'd go into the studio early in the morning and rehearse blocking and such. Then there would be a run-through, we'd have a break, and then we'd do the show. Once it went on the air, we couldn't stop.

RF: What was the difference doing *The Carol Burnett Show*?

SG: We'd go in on a Thursday night for three hours or so and rehearse the music and do some pre-recording for some of the numbers. Some of them were live and some were pre-recorded. Then we went in at 11:00 the next morning for another run-through, there'd be a lunch break, and then we'd come back and do a dress rehearsal. We'd have another break and come back and do the final taping. Basically it was the same thing, but the difference was that with

an hour-long live show, we went on the air at 9:00, and at 10:00 we were done. On Carol's show or a videotaped show, taping an hour show sometimes takes two and a half, three, or maybe four hours.

RF: What was it about the music on that show that would make a Jim Keltner be so awe-inspired?

SG: On the theme song, I used to play a lot of fills, and I always managed to play something different. It was a hot band, it really was. Peter Matz was the leader. The first time we came in to do the show and the cast came in to rehearse,

they were astounded, because we had some hard stuff to play and they couldn't believe how good the band was. We'd do a lot of things in one take and not have to do it over and over.

RF: What exactly is required of a drummer in a variety situation?

SG: To have no fear. To know what you're

doing and take charge. You have to work with the leaders, and when they feel comfortable that you're competent, they don't stand up there waving their arms like a bird trying to get off the ground. On a variety show, you run into all kinds of things—changes in tempo, ritards, accelerandos. It's a potpourri

do that, bang, that hour was over and we were done.

I never really intended to be a studio player; I didn't set my goals at that. I just enjoyed playing, as much as I do today. From that time on, I started getting calls, and I got into the record thing. I didn't really want to do television originally.

five days a week. I didn't want to be bothered working five days a week. I was on staff with two networks at the same time—NBC for *The Perry Como Show* and ABC with Patti Page—with the provision that I just do the show I was supposed to do, which entailed a day or two. It worked out that they

LISTENER'S GUIDE

Q. For readers who'd like to listen to albums that most represent your drumming, which ones would you recommend?

Album	Artist	Label Catalog #
Swinging At the Steel Pier	Elliot Lawrence Band	Fantasy 3236
Bye Bye Birdie	Bill Potts	Colpix SCP 451
Big Band Plays Richard Rogers	Michel Legrand	Philips PHS600-074
Stereophonic Suite For Two Bands	Vic Schoen Les Brown	Kapp KD-7003-S
Bernstein Conducts Bernstein	Leonard Bernstein	Columbia MS-6677
("Prelude, Fugue & Riffs" section only, with Benny Goodman)		
Count Basie & The Mills Bros!	Count Basie Mills Bros.	Dot DLP 25838
Singin' Friends	Gene Roland	Brunswick BL-54114
I've Gotta Be Me	Tony Bennett	Columbia CS9882

of tempos and different feelings.

RF: Can you recall being in the hot seat for the very first time on the first show you did?

SG: Every time I sit down to play it's like that; you're always in the hot seat. I found it interesting, though. It was a live show, and there was so much to

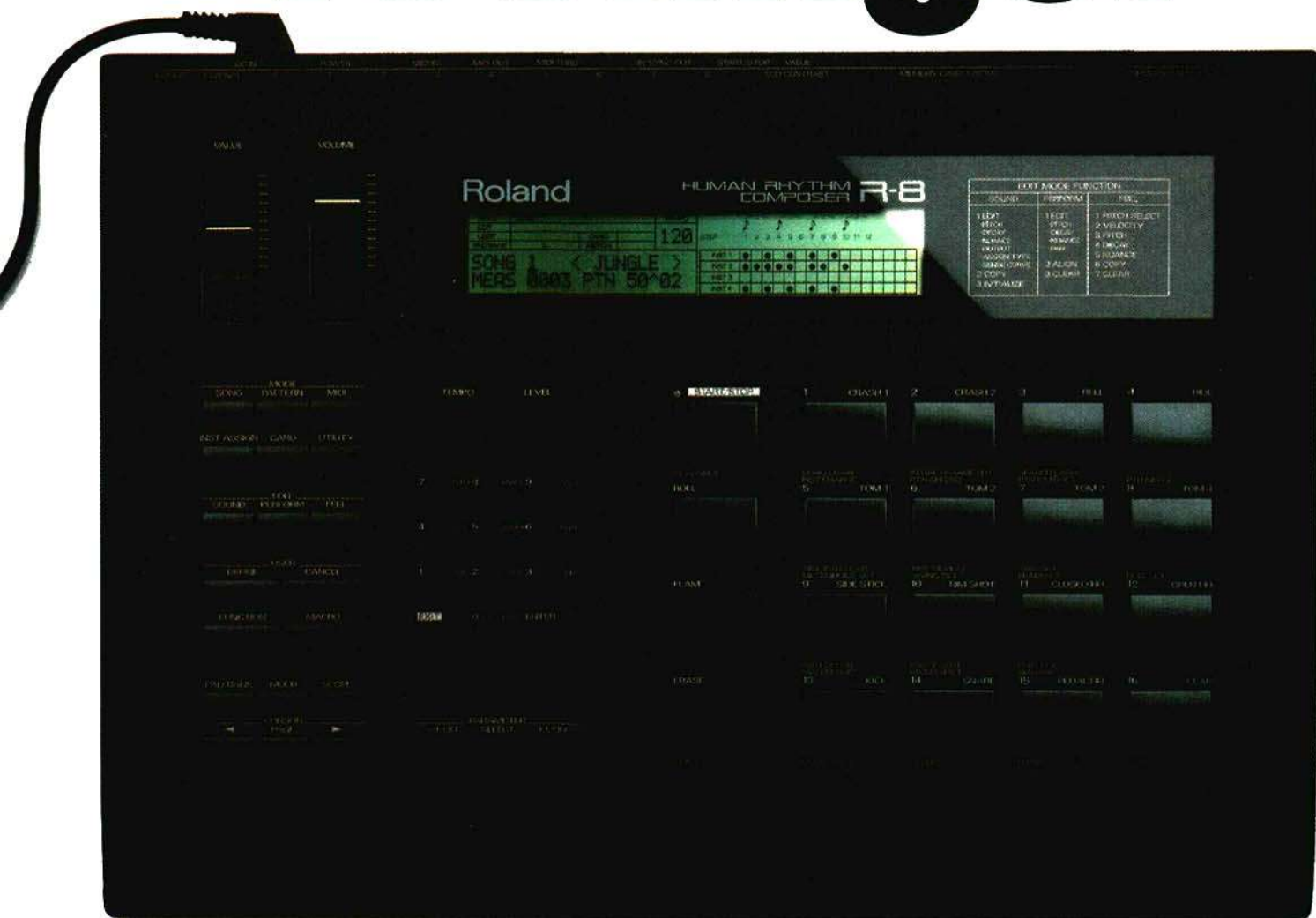
At that time television paid something like \$12.50 an hour, records were \$41.25, and jingles were something like \$20.00 an hour. You would figure the biggest medium in the world would pay better.

But I got calls to do shows, and then they used to have staff orchestras who worked

were different days. After Patti went off, I went to CBS to do *The Steve Lawrence Show*.

We did a show in 1955 called *Music '55* with Stan Kenton, which was another live show. That was the year that Patti had a show called *The Big Record*. I'll say one thing, the band on that show was very, very hot.

**It won't
hurt your
feelings.**



This, in a nutshell, is the problem: As rhythm machines have become increasingly more consistent, they've also become increasingly less "human." What you put in has feelings. What it puts out doesn't.

Which is why we're taking this opportunity to tell you about our remarkable new R-8 Human Rhythm Composer, so named because it makes the drumming as natural as you had intended.

The R-8 doesn't simply move beats around or "sloppy up" the groove. To the contrary, it gives you such incredible control that you can shift the timing in increments as small as 1/384 notes.

You can also program pitch, velocity, decay and nuance to such an extent that you'll actually be able to hear the drumstick move from the edge of the ride cymbal over to the cup.

And you can do all of this in either a predetermined way, in which case you use the "Groove" mode. Or in an unexpected way, in which you use the "Random" mode. (Just because we call it "random" doesn't mean you take what it gives. Once again, you can control everything.)

Nor does the "human" touch end here. We've also made the 16 pads velocity- and pressure-sensitive, so that the sounds end up feeling vibrant instead of clinical.

The Roland R-8 has eight patches where these "Human Feel" settings can be stored, and each of these patches functions as an "overlay" for any of the patterns in the R-8.

Of course, all of this wizardry would be lost if the sound quality wasn't what it should be. It is. The R-8 features 16-bit

drum and percussion sounds sampled at a CD-quality 44.1 kHz. And even better, both the eight individual outputs as well as the stereo outputs are available for routing those CD-quality sounds to a mixer for individual processing.

Approximately 2,600 notes, or 10 songs, can be stored in the R-8's internal memory.

And up to 100 patterns with up to 99 measures each, can be programmed in the unit. The R-8 has 68 internal sounds. And

when you combine these with the two ROM/RAM cards, each of which contains 26 sounds, you have a total of 120 different drum and percussion sounds.

One more thing. If you record a particular pattern on an R-8, you can always go in after it's been recorded and assign panning, tuning, nuance and volume for each instrument for every single event in the pattern. The result can be something totally different than you'd expect from a drum machine.

As you've gathered, our Human Rhythm Composer is a truly remarkable and essential piece of equipment. Or as *Keyboard Magazine* put it, "If you're serious about making electronic music with the depth and expressiveness that used to require real live musicians, you owe it to yourself to get a demo of the R-8."

Our sentiments exactly.



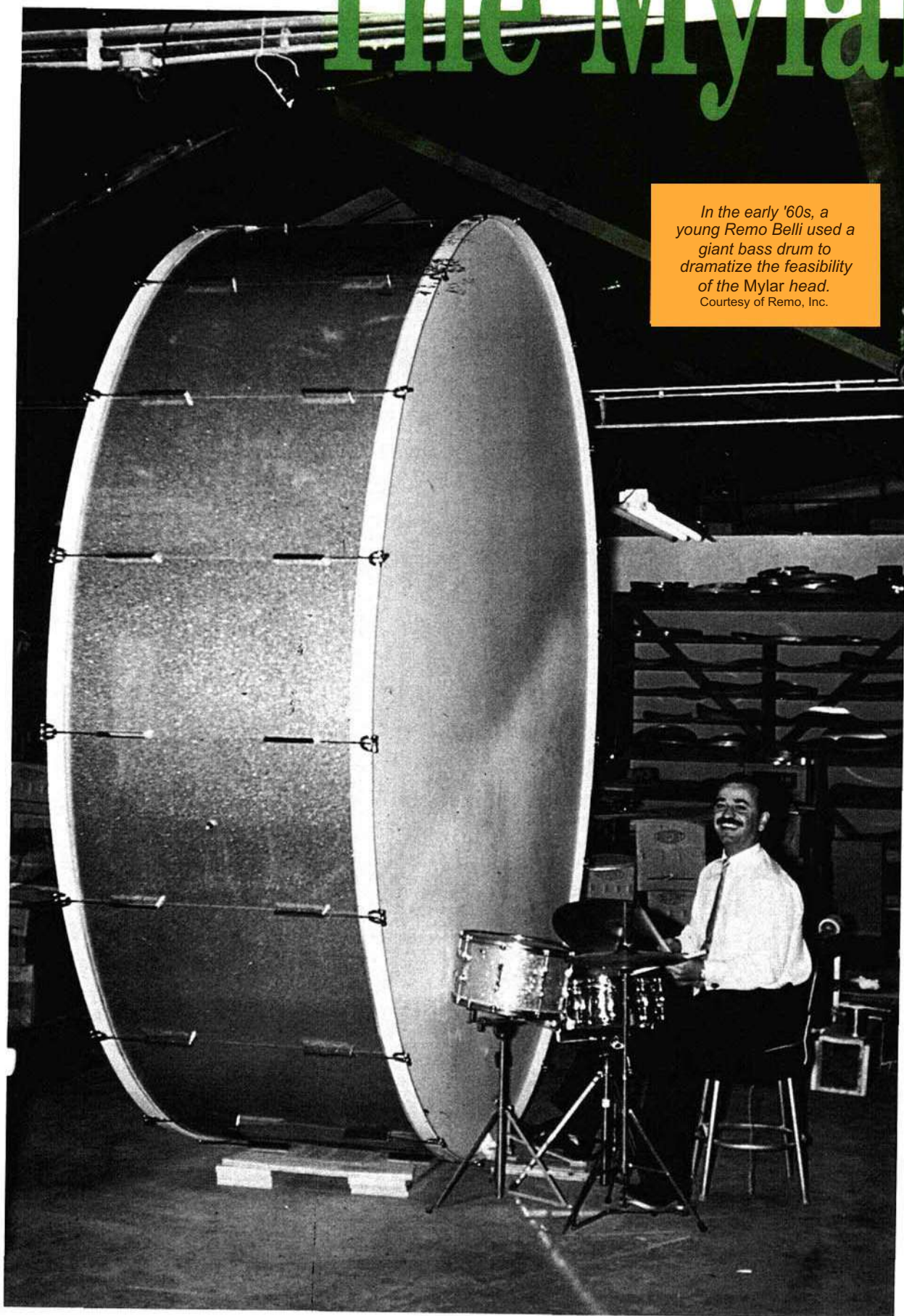
Even the drumsticks are more human.

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The Development Of The Mylar

In the early '60s, a young Remo Belli used a giant bass drum to dramatize the feasibility of the Mylar head.
Courtesy of Remo, Inc.

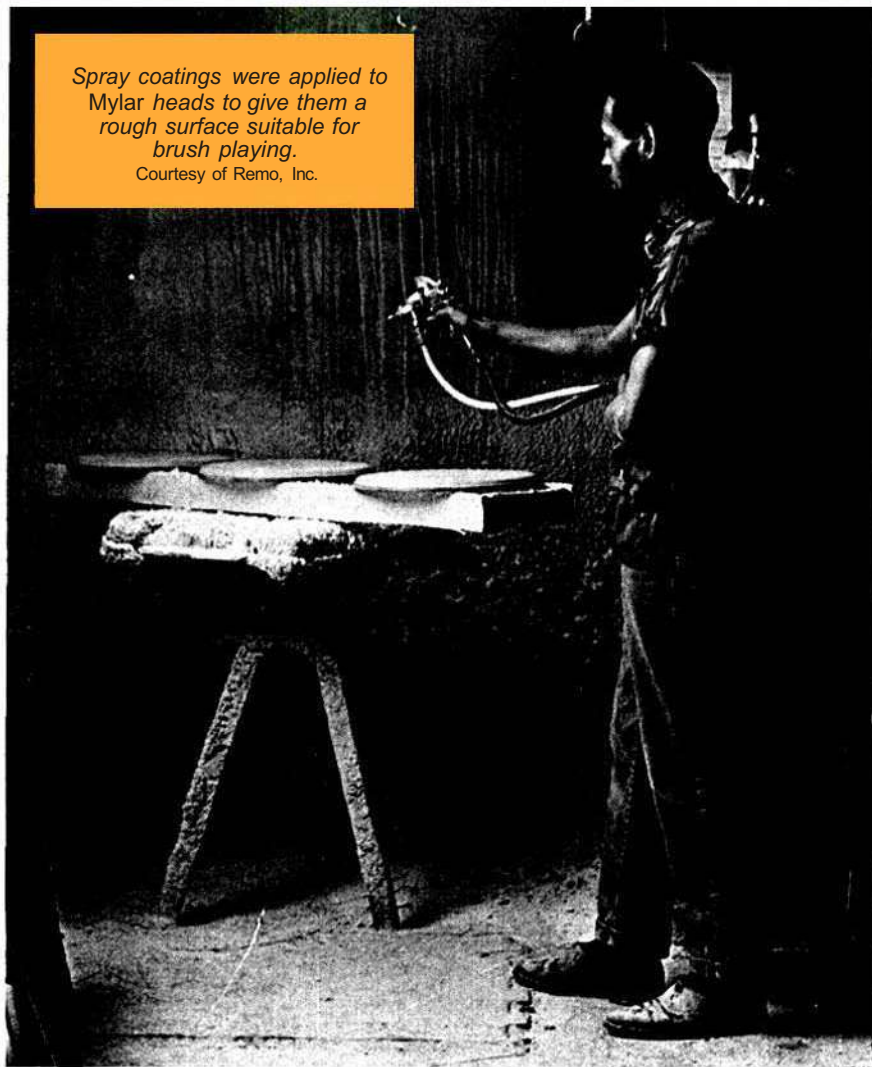


Drumhead

by Charles "Woody" Thompson

Spray coatings were applied to Mylar heads to give them a rough surface suitable for brush playing.

Courtesy of Remo, Inc.



The world of drumming has seen many technological innovations during this century, from the invention of foot pedals to the MIDI revolution. Even in light of such vast changes in drumming equipment, the development of the synthetic drumhead must rank as one of the most important innovations in the field. The decision to fabricate a drumhead from an inert, inorganic material was an idea that, overnight, solved some of the most significant problems that drummers had historically been forced to deal with. The synthetic head has become so much a standard of the drum industry today that many young drummers are not aware that a mere 30 years ago most drummers were using heads made of animal hide. It would be difficult to imagine a modern drum industry *without* synthetic heads.

Though few people would argue the impact that synthetic heads have had on

the industry, fewer still are aware of how the modern *Mylar* drumhead came to be. The saga behind the synthetic head features several pioneering figures. It also provides a fascinating case history of the invention, development, and marketing of an innovative product in a free-enterprise system. In order to truly appreciate the story, it is necessary first to appreciate the value of synthetic heads and to understand what kind of improvements they brought to drumming.

The first successful synthetic heads were developed during the late 1950s. Prior to that time, drumheads were made from calfskin. Under ideal conditions, calfskin makes a very fine drumhead, and there are still drummers—notably (and perhaps most outspokenly) Mel Lewis—who prefer its sound and feel.

Calfskin heads, however, have many

drawbacks. Chief among these is their lack of consistency and their sensitivity to moisture. It is necessary for a good-sounding drumhead to be uniform in thickness from one edge to another. Yet it is typical to find perhaps one calf head in ten that meets this requirement and has an acceptable sound.

Selecting a head in the era of calfskin meant sorting through the available product in a process similar to choosing a good-sounding cymbal. Each head was unique, and the selection method was by trial and error. Once the head was on the drum, high moisture content in the air would cause the head to become slack and sound mushy. The calfskin would actually absorb moisture and would not only sound bad but become very susceptible to breakage. Conversely, calf heads that were tightened down in wet weather would often shrink radically in drier weather and actually split while in place on a drum. Calfskin heads were particularly a problem on larger drums such as timpani and bass drums, and for parade drummers who did their playing outdoors.

Drummers and inventors attempted to solve these problems by using various materials as drumheads for many years. As early as the 19th century, a patent was issued for a head constructed of cloth saturated in cellulose acetate. None of these alternatives was successful enough to replace calfskin—until the invention of polyester film.

Polyester film was invented in England in the 1940s at Imperial Chemical Industries. The film possessed most of the attributes needed to create a successful synthetic drumhead. It was absolutely unaffected by moisture even when water was poured directly on it, it had great tensile strength—meaning it could withstand a terrific pounding—it was economical, it could be manufactured in various thicknesses, and it was chemically inert, so that it could come in contact with other chemicals without reacting.

According to Bill Ludwig, Jr. of Ludwig Industries, polyester film was created to fill a military need during World War II. "During the war," says Ludwig, "reconnaissance planes would fly over German-occupied areas in Europe and take surveillance films that would be used to plan bombing missions. They were using film made of cellulose, and it was not unusual for this film to break, negating the effort of the reconnaissance mission. The War Department was begging for a substitute for cellulose. Polyester film was developed to make a movie film that would not break."

Chick Evans,
displaying his
drumheads in the
late 1950s (right).

Chick Evans'
drumheads in their
molds (below).

Courtesy of Chick Evans



Following the war, DuPont Chemical Co. bought patent rights to manufacture polyester film in the United States. Their product, now known as *Mylar*, was used extensively as a packaging material, for recording tape, and as insulation for electric motors. But it wasn't until 1953 that polyester film was to keep its date with the destiny of drummers. It was in that year that Jim Irwin, a chemical engineer for Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co. (3M) in St. Paul, Minnesota, and brother of jazz trumpeter Pee Wee Irwin, traveled to New York City. "I used to go to New York to see my brother play in the nightclubs there," Irwin says. "It was around 1952 or '53, and he was leading a band at the Cafe Metropole. As I remember, the drummer was Duke Ellington's former drummer, Sonny Greer. He broke a drumhead that night, and later I went up to him and told him that I thought I could make a head for him that wouldn't break. I had been working with polyester film at 3M for about eight years and thought it might work as a head material. I went back to Minnesota and made one up by serating the edge of a piece of *Mylar* so it could be bent around and attached to the flesh hoop of a calfskin head. I took it back to Sonny in New York, and he used it and said that it was the best head he'd ever played on. He was really impressed with its uniformity."

As a 3M chemist, Irwin was familiar with the process of patent application. He applied for a patent on his *Mylar* head in 1953, and received it in 1955. Although Irwin had no plans to produce it commercially himself, he did approach some major-drum manufacturers with his idea. "The general reaction of the manufacturers, as I

remember, was that the skin head had been around for 5,000 years and would probably be around for 5,000 more," Irwin says.

During the same time period, Joe Grolimund, who worked for the Ludwig Drum Co. in Chicago, was experimenting with various materials in an effort to build a better drumhead. Grolimund, who went on to become president of the Selmer Musical Instrument Co., is today 94 years old. His recollection of his work with synthetic heads is hazy, but he does remember tacking polyester film to a flesh hoop and being impressed with its characteristics. The head wouldn't break and did not dent easily. Grolimund says that he suggested to the Ludwig Drum Co. that they try to develop the idea, but found—as Irwin had—that the manufacturer was not quick to respond to the opportunity. "I took a rolled up sheet of *Mylar* in to Bill Ludwig, Jr. and recom-

mended that he try using it as a head. He had experimented with other plastics in the past with bad results. He put the piece of rolled up *Mylar* under his desk and didn't take it out until he found out that someone else was going to show a *Mylar* head at a trade show. Then he got excited and got one together for the show," Grolimund says.

Ludwig recalls his first encounters with the idea of a *Mylar* head. "It was around 1957 or 1958. Joe Grolimund had brought the idea to us. But we were also getting orders for flesh hoops from a man in Santa Fe, New Mexico, named Chick Evans. After we'd gotten three or four orders from him we became curious; we suspected that when people made large orders for parts from us they might be making drums. So we contacted him. Chick wrote back to say he was making a new kind of drumhead, and he sent us one. It was a piece of *Mylar* tacked or stapled to one of our flesh hoops."

Marion L. "Chick" Evans is an important figure in the development of a successful *Mylar* head. He was arguably the first per-

son who was able to put a *Mylar* head into commercial production. He was one of the founding partners of the Evans Products Company, manufacturers of Evans heads, a company that still carries his name. Significantly, Chick was neither a chemist, drum manufacturer, nor retailer. He was a working drummer trying to solve his own equipment problems. He was born in Texas in 1903 and was working professionally as a drummer at the Prince Theater in Houston, Texas, and on Houston radio at the age of 17. During the 1920s, Chick moved to Santa Fe, but during the 1940s and '50s he returned to his native state to perform with various well-known country & western artists.

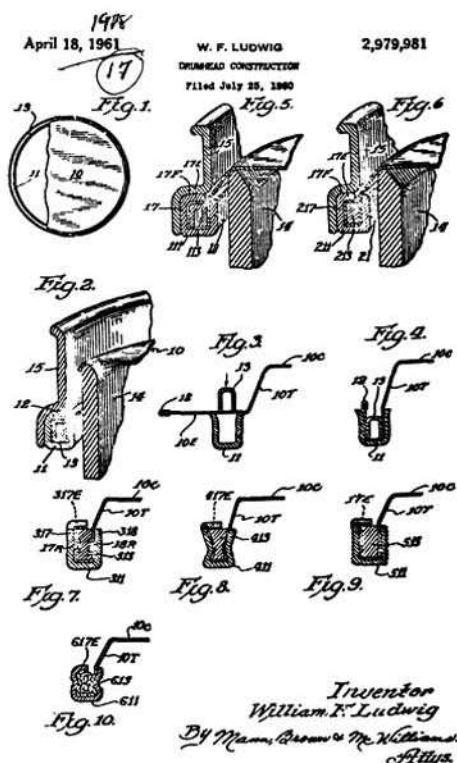
Like other drummers of the time, Evans was forced to contend with the inconsistencies of calfskin. Unlike most other drummers, Evans was constantly experimenting

LUDWIG "PLAYON" PLASTIC DRUM HEADS



The Ludwig catalog of 1959 featured a smiling William F. Ludwig, Sr., displaying his company's Mylar heads. Their weatherproof nature was dramatized by the photo of the marching drummer playing in the rain.

Courtesy of Ludwig Industries



Patent diagrams from 1961 showing details of Ludwig drumhead construction. Courtesy of Ludwig Industries

with ways to alleviate these problems. He had made heads using silk, duck, and airplane cloth, treating them with various glues and resins in an effort to make them durable enough for use as a drumhead. They were all less than ideal, but some were better than others. Evans describes one of his early creations: "At one point I was making a head out of nylon, which seemed to work best. I actually sold some of those heads to the Houston schools through Herb Brochstein [present head of Pro-Mark Inc.] for their marching bands. I told them that they wouldn't stand up too well, but they would put them on their parade drums and use them when it was raining."

Evans first became familiar with Mylar after seeing it advertised on a Galveston television station in 1954 or '55. His next move was to order samples from DuPont and make some prototype heads. He was encouraged by the results, but these early heads tore out of their hoops when tightened down, and puckers and tucks were created in the Mylar where it was bent around the hoop. "I ended up scalloping the edge of the Mylar in a sawtooth pattern so that it could be bent over the hoop without creasing," Evans recalls. "I was ordering wooden hoops from Ludwig and Gretsch and having them sliced up into thinner hoops on a band saw at a local

cabinet shop. I would bend the scalloped edge of the Mylar around one hoop and then take a second, thinner hoop and place it over the Mylar on the first hoop, sandwiching the film between the two hoops. Then I would drill through the thinner hoop and through the Mylar but not into the first hoop. I would drive tacks through these holes in the thinner hoop and the Mylar, and they would be held in the undrilled first hoop." It was in this fashion that the first commercially marketed Mylar head was made.

Evans knew that what he had created would be invaluable to drummers, and he started to market his creation. But by his own admission, he was an unsophisticated entrepreneur at best. "I didn't really know how to go about it. I didn't know anything about trade magazines or any of that, so I went to the phone company and looked through all their phone books to get a list of music stores that I thought would be interested in carrying my head. I printed up a simple brochure and letter describing my product and sent it out by mail. The response to the brochure and sales letter was overwhelming," he says.

One individual who was impressed with Evans' creation was Bennett Shacklette, director of the marching band at Santa Fe

continued on page 94



**INNOVATION
IN STEP WITH
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In 8 years of painstaking work, Paiste Sound Development invented a new alloy for cymbal sounds: an alloy that goes beyond any current materials used for cymbals in its capability for sound—a new era of sound metal. By applying our traditional Paiste cymbal artistry to the new alloy we then hand craft the most beautiful, sophisticated cymbals.

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—IAN PAICE

"These cymbal sounds will inspire drummers to tune their instruments accordingly. The sound of the drums has to be richer to complement the cymbals."

—PIERRE FAVRE

"This is the first cymbal that has a wide dynamic range without being overpowering. They cut through in all dynamic situations with the same clarity. In the studio, they are fantastic."

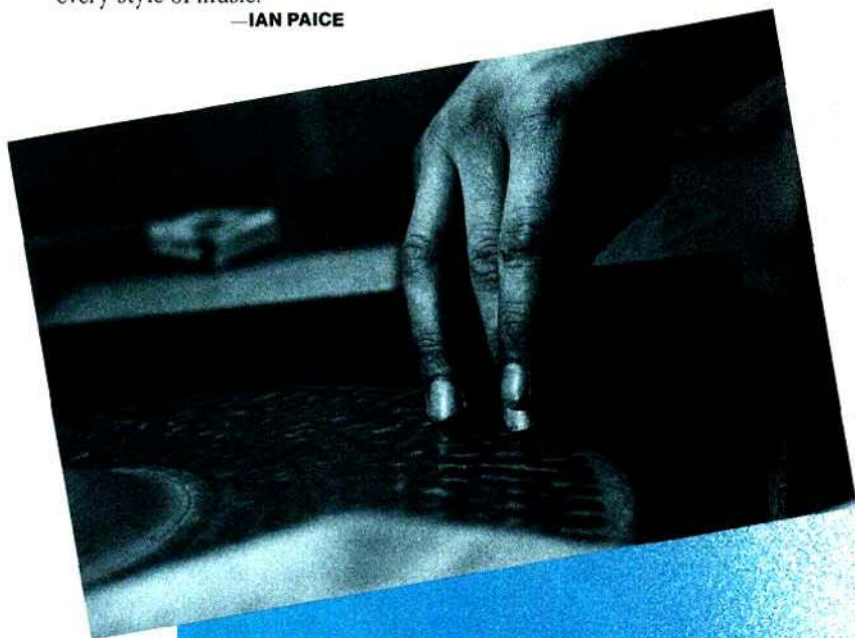
—LEON NDUGU CHANCLER

"You know how it feels when you just get out of the shower and you're nice and clean and fresh? That's how I feel about these new cymbals. Brilliant!"

—MARK HERNDON

"Making these cymbals is like making music, it's art. With these sounds, Paiste jumped above its own shadow into a complete new cymbal world."

—FREDY STUDER



Pearl



Photo by Rick Mattingly

After I concluded my head-switch experiment, I called Pearl to determine what heads were going to be made available on "stock" Custom Z kits. I was informed that they would most likely be shipped with *Pinstripes* on the tops and clear *Ambassadors* on the bottoms, but that since the drums were in a special-order price range, any head combination the buyer desired could be accommodated. So "you pays your money and you takes your choice," head-wise.

The bass drum was fitted with a *Pinstripe* batter head and a solid Pearl *Black Beat* logo front head. The power of this drum was awesome to behold. I played it both completely unmuffled and with a small amount of muffling. In any sort of live situation, it would unquestionably dominate the stage. The tone was warm, fat, round, and all the other positive terms applied to a bass drum's sound. I was also pleased with the amount of

attack, even when using a felt beater. For an amplified situation or for funky, quick-footed playing, more muffling would be required—probably in addition to a hole cut in the front head. But I'd almost hate to see that happen; this drum can create so much sound that it seems a shame to cut back on it in any way. The bass drum is definitely one of the *Custom Z*'s best features.

The other is the snare drum. Using the same shell construction as the other drums in an 8-ply thickness, the snare drum was crisp, precise, and sensitive. (All the more impressive when you consider that this was a 6 1/2" deep drum.) A coated *Ambassador* top head and clear *Ambassador* snare-side head provided clean response and sticking sounds, while the shell added warmth and projection. The drum was fitted with a 20-strand wire snare attached by tape to the smallest throw-off mechanism I've seen on a production drum in a long time. All in all, the snare drum was a pleasure to play.

Construction Features

The *Custom Z* kit features many innovative details—some functional and some purely cosmetic. For example, all tension casings, tom mounts, leg holders, etc. attached to the shells are cushioned by rubber gaskets. All the lug bolts are fitted with nylon washers, so there is no metal-to-metal

Sound

THE TWO WORDS THAT CAME TO mind when first viewing Pearl's new *Custom Z* Series drumkit were "beautiful" and "BIG." The kit offers massive drums and hardware, along with a unique finish and beautiful appointments. The culmination of five years of research and development, Pearl modestly refers to the *Custom Z* in a press release as "the finest musical instrument Pearl has ever made."

The *Custom Z* shells are completely of maple, with a birds-eye maple outer ply. And while Pearl's shells have traditionally been 6-ply, shell thicknesses on the *Custom Z* vary with the size of the drum: 8" toms are 6-ply (7.5 mm); 10" to 14" rack toms are 8-ply (10 mm); and 16" floor toms to 24" bass drums are 8-ply (12.5 mm). No reinforcing rings are used.

Pearl is well-known for "power toms," but the *Custom Z* toms take a step beyond even those, with "square-sized" drums: 8x8, 10x10, 12x12, 13x13 and 14x14 rack toms, and 16x16 and 18x18 floor toms. But it's the bass drums that do the most to create the impression of sheer bigness: They come in 18x22 and 18x24 sizes. Snare drums are available in 6 1/2" and 8" depths. The kit that was sent to us for review consisted of a 24" bass drum, 10", 12", and 13" rack toms, a 16" floor tom, and a 6 1/2" deep snare.

As would be expected, the sound this kit produces is *big*. (This is *not* the kit for weddings and lounge gigs.) The maple shells provide a warm, round sound, and the sheer size of the drums helps to produce depth and tone.

I was a bit surprised to find the toms on our test kit fitted with clear *Ambassador* heads top and bottom, since single-ply *Ambassadors* tend to produce a thinner sound than do twin-ply heads—and don't last as long under heavy impact. (Drums this deep are not particularly sensitive; they must be hit with a certain amount of authority in order to move enough air to involve the bottom head and enhance resonance and projection.)

I discovered that the *Ambassadors* produced a very impressive attack sound, giving the drums a lot of clarity and projection with a moderate amount of depth. But they did start to pit under heavy impact. Switching the top heads to *Pinstripes*, I found that I got a deeper, mellower tonality and greater head durability, but lost a bit of the precise definition and clarity that the *Ambassadors* had provided. The thicker heads also rendered the toms even less sensitive to low-impact playing, but since I can't honestly see these drums in a low-volume application, that's sort of a moot point.

Custom Z Series Kit

contact against the hoops. (The drums all feature Pearl's *Super Hoops*.) The lug receivers feature brass-plated swivel nuts, which add a nice accent to the overall look of the kit.

Certain details struck me as unnecessarily sophisticated. These include the heavy-duty bass drum spurs with spring-loaded convertible tips. You pull down on the oversized rubber foot, give it a twist, and it snaps back to reveal a spike tip. That seems like a lot of mechanics to achieve something that a threaded tip does just as efficiently. Another item that struck me as "gadgetry" was the clamp-method floor tom leg bracket. Instead of sliding the leg in and out of the bracket in the traditional method, the bracket itself is hinged on one side and has a quick-release wing bolt on the other. The legs are each fitted with a drumkey-operated memory collar that conforms to the shape of the holder bracket. The idea is that you can open up the bracket, fit in the leg, and close it down again, keeping the exact height and angle you had before—assuming you remember precisely *which* leg went into *which* of the three brackets on the drum. I like the idea of a memory collar for height retention, but question the necessity of all the other machinery. I should also mention that the floor tom legs are a full 1/2" thick—making them very heavy—and feature enormous rubber feet. This keeps them in scale with the massiveness of the rest of the kit, but ironically, they don't seem long enough to me.

You only have to do a bit of simple arithmetic to realize that a kit like our test model is not for people who like to sit low. Start with a 24" bass drum, mount 12x12 and 13x13 toms on top of it, and you can't avoid winding up with your tom heads about 37" off the floor. (As a matter of fact, Pearl recommends that a combination of floor stands be used, and that the toms not be mounted on the bass drums at all. But that would only shorten the setup by an inch or so if you wanted your rack toms fairly close together atop the bass drum.) Naturally, using a 22" bass drum would shorten the overall kit height. But when I set up our test kit in the lowest configuration possible (while maintaining a reasonable playing angle for the rack toms), I found that I had to extend the floor tom legs to their highest possible point to get the floor tom up to a playable height. My suggestion to Pearl would be to make the legs thinner and longer. They'd probably wind up using the same amount of steel.

Hardware

The cymbal stand and boom supplied

with our test kit were Pearl's 850W models, with double-braced tripods and clamp-mechanism height adjustments. These feature hinges on one side and wing bolts on the other. Nylon bushings are used at every connection point, and the tilters are infinitely adjustable—one of Pearl's greatest contributions to drum-equipment design. I usually feel that extra-heavy-duty tripods are overkill, but if one were to mount additional *Custom Z* toms on a cymbal stand, or needed to bring in a crash cymbal over and above a number of rack toms on a boom, a wide, heavy tripod base would be called for.

The 950 snare stand is also double-braced, and features a locking basket adjustment with a quick-release lever. You put the drum in once, tighten the basket, lock it in place, and from then on use the quick-release lever to place or remove the drum. It's a convenient—if nonessential—feature.

The 950 hi-hat is single-braced, features twin adjustable springs, and uses yet another clamp-style mechanism for the clutch. Although the action was very precise and comfortable, I found the pedal/spring assembly noisy, and the linkage questionable. The pedal's stroke is adjustable—independent of the travel of the hi-hat cymbals—by means of two small, vertical, hexagonal rods that link the pedal itself to the bar that pulls the hi-hat down. These rods are secured to that bar by two small bolts tightened by a drumkey. It seems likely that a heavy player, with an equally heavy foot, would be able to loosen those bolts fairly easily—allowing the hexagonal rods to slip right out of the pull-bar and disconnecting the pedal from the rest of the hi-hat entirely. (As a matter of fact, I only discovered this linkage design after that very thing happened to me—and by no means do I have a heavy foot!) The adjustability of the footboard seems a small convenience to gain in exchange for the risk of total disconnection.

The double tom mount on the bass drum shell utilizes Pearl's familiar individual arms to mount each rack tom. These arms are fitted with infinitely-adjustable "elbows" as opposed to ratchets, which makes tom positioning very flexible. All connections between the arms and the drums feature clamp-style brackets with nylon bushings and memory collars. I found the collars to be essential, since no reasonable amount of tightening the wing bolt on the tom mounts seemed to prevent the drums from being able to rotate on their mounting arms. The notched memory collars

solved this problem.

The 880 bass drum pedal was a delight to play. I found it quick, light, silent, and strong. It features a felt-lined chain "channel" to contain the drive chain instead of a sprocket, and a small bracket on the right side that allows for quick spring-tension adjustments.

Cosmetics

The exterior ply on the *Custom Z* is birds-eye maple that has been treated in "a secret process patented by Pearl" to create what the company is calling a "Champagne" finish. If you have not seen the color ads, picture a birds-eye maple wood grain in a cafe-au-lait sort of color, and you'll come pretty close to it. It's a rich-looking finish, and since it's a fairly neutral base color, it should pick up stage lights rather well. As of now, this is the only finish in which the *Custom Z* is offered.

Price

Pearl makes no bones about the fact that this kit is not for everybody. It is designed for drummers who have the professional application—and financial means—to justify a premium-quality instrument. A five-piece kit with a 22" bass drum, including hardware, carries a list price of \$4,860.00. Our six-piece test kit, with a 24" bass drum and a 10x10 tom (and the hardware necessary to mount it on a cymbal stand), will sell for \$5,710.00. By the time you figure in the cost of the cases you would absolutely have to have to protect such an investment, you could very reasonably be talking in the \$6,500.00 range. But Pearl sees it as a question of value-for-dollar, and of offering something special in limited quantities to a limited—and extremely selective—market. How strong that market will prove to be is yet to be determined.

—Rick Van Horn



Photo by Rick Mattingly

Pearl Export Kit



Photo by Rick Mattingly

AT THE SAME TIME THAT PEARL introduced the *Custom Z* kit at the top of its line, the company also upgraded the *Export* kit at the low end. Already a proven seller, the "new" *Export* kit has even more to offer to new or budget-conscious drummers.

The standard *Export* kit is a five-piece package set, but add-ons are available for expansion. Our test kit consisted of 10x10, 10x12, and 11x13 rack toms, a 16x16 floor tom, a 16x22 bass drum, and a 6 1/2" metal snare drum. *Export* kits are finished in a variety of plastic coverings; ours was a very bright and attractive Ferrari red.

Construction And Hardware

Export drums are made of 9-ply mahogany and selected wood grain. One of the improvements on the kit is the replacement of the speckled interior finish with a sanded wood-grain interior ply. This gives the drums a much more professional appearance, and warms up the sound, as well. The bearing edges on the toms of our test kit were well-cut, but not smoothed or finished in any way beyond basic sanding. Considering the price range of the *Export* kit, this is not surprising. The bass drum is fitted with metal counterhoops front and back. (Perhaps metal hoops are cheaper to make than wood

hoops, and thus help to keep the cost of the kit down, but I think they adversely affect the sound of the bass drum.) A rubber insert pad is included for clamping the bass drum pedal to the hoop.

All of the hardware fittings on all the drums were solid and well-made—with absolutely no semblance of "cheapness" about them. Another of the upgrades was a new "high-tension style" lug casing, which brings the look of the *Export* series into line with that of Pearl's more expensive kits. This is achieved by inserting a rectangular metal piece between the top and bottom lugs of the drums, resulting in a single-lug look. That insert piece is held securely by the lugs themselves, so no additional hardware or gluing is necessary. It's a clever move on Pearl's part, and it works; from any distance it is impossible to tell that the lugs are not one piece.

Another improvement is the installation of 730M telescoping bass drum spurs. These feature convertible spike/rubber-tipped feet, and can be rotated and locked into different positions for playing or packing up. They are solid and secure, and hold the drum well against slippage.

For better bass drum playing, the *Export* kit now includes a 780 chain-drive bass drum pedal. Essentially the same pedal as

Pearl's top-of-the-line 880, it features a different footboard and a slightly less sophisticated spring tension adjustment. Otherwise, it's a pro-quality pedal that I found extremely enjoyable to play. This is a marked departure from the kinds of pedals often found on entry-level kits.

The stands accompanying the *Export* kit are all from Pearl's 850 series, which is a completely professional, single-braced line. Again, nothing tacky here. The cymbal stand and boom feature Pearl's infinitely adjustable drum tilters and clamp-mechanism height adjustments. The snare stand features a very small tripod and will allow for quite a low setting. (This could be useful for younger, smaller players just starting out, for older drummers who like to sit low, or for drummers who want to mount a deep-shelled snare drum.) The hi-hat is smooth, solid, and quiet. The quality of the stands makes a large contribution to the value of the *Export* kit.

The tom-mounting arms differ from Pearl's more expensive models in that they use ratchet "elbows" instead of rotating drums. These offer slightly less flexibility in tom positioning, but still provide ample choice and solid holding power. The toms are held with a clamp-style mechanism, and each arm is fitted with memory collars.

Sound

Now that I've praised all the construction and cosmetic features of the *Export* kit, how does it sound? To start with, the toms sound very good. Our test kit featured Pearl's own RC heads (Pearl's version of a *Pinstripe*) on the tops and clear heads on the bottoms. I found that I was able to get a warm, throaty sound out of the toms, with satisfactory projection and tone. They wouldn't get as deep as I would have liked, but mahogany shells have that characteristic. I must say, however, that I attribute part of this problem to the batter heads. They seemed exceptionally thin for twin-ply heads, although that is what Pearl told me they were. When I used Remo *Pinstripe* heads on the toms, I was able to improve their tonality and depth a bit.

The bass drum sound was acceptable to good, depending on what one would like to hear from a bass drum. The batter head was another RC, and the front head was a Pearl-logo *Black Beat* with a large hole cut out of the center. The drum had lots of punch, since most of the attack sound from the beater striking the back head was going straight out that front hole. But it lacked depth and tone for the same reason. I tried a different front head with only a 4" hole

cut well off-center, and this gave the drum a much fatter sound. If you like a quick, snappy bass drum, the original setup would be excellent for you. If you want a bigger sound, plan to replace the bass drum head with something that allows the sound to bounce around in the shell a while before leaving the drum.

The snare drum is the weak link in this otherwise excellent starter kit. Its metal shell appears extremely thin, and the drum sounded about the same way. It is unusual to see a 6 1/2" drum on an entry-level kit, so I had high hopes for a powerful sound—even considering the price range. But the drum lacked snare sensitivity and was very "clanky." I tried replacing the Pearl WA batter head (similar to a coated *Ambassador*) with a variety of other brands and styles, and got only moderate improvement. If you are really into the Alex Van Halen snare sound, this drum could approximate it, but that was about the extent of its capabilities.

Value

Even given my reservations about the snare drum, the new *Export* kit is an exceptionally good value, considering the sound quality of the other drums and the excellent hardware. At \$990.00 for a five-piece kit, including hardware, there could be money left over for quality cymbals, different heads, or perhaps an immediate snare drum upgrade. This means that the *Export* would not only be an outstanding first set for a young drummer, but also seriously considerable for a part-timer or budget-conscious professional.

—Rick Van Horn



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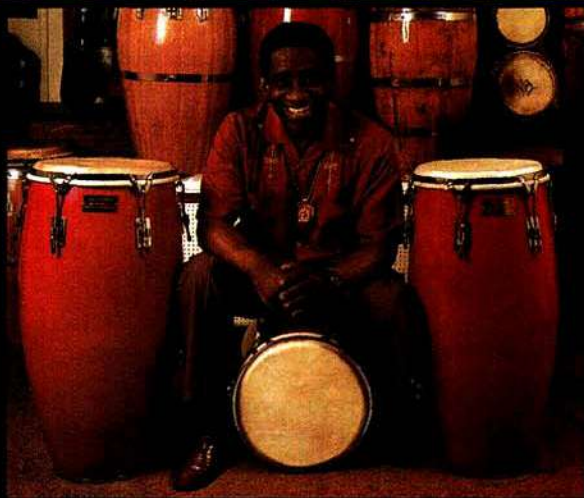
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New Zildjians

Photos by Rick Mattingly

Zildjian recently introduced two new cymbal models to their ever-increasing line: the Z series *Mega Bell Ride* and the K *Custom Dry Ride*. These two cymbals are absolute extreme opposites of one another, and it's interesting to see Zildjian really searching for new and improved sounds. What's impressive about the concept and design of these cymbals is that it's obvious the people at Zildjian are closely watching and listening to drummers to see what our needs are, and coming up with products specifically designed to be of help.



For example, take the new Z series *Mega Bell Ride*. Here's an extremely heavy 21" ride cymbal designed for heavy rock and metal players. The great thing about this cymbal is the size of its bell: 8" in diameter! When you're playing the types of music that the *Mega Bell* was designed for, the sheer volume and "cut" that the bell provides is perfect. It would have no problem penetrating through heavy guitar and bass sounds. And the 8" diameter bell is a big target—something that's good to have when

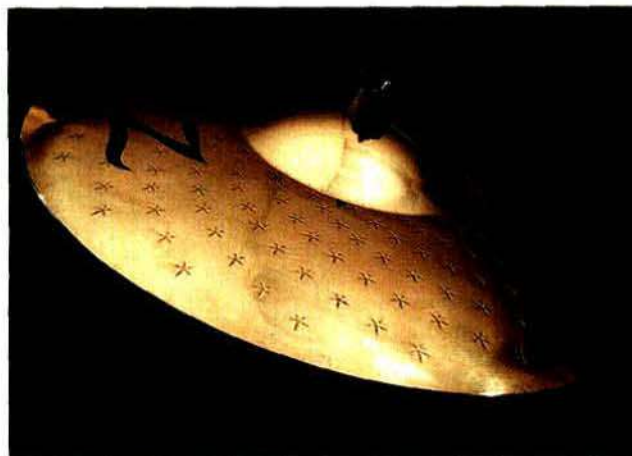
you're playing that high-energy, high-adrenaline music.

The *Mega Bell Ride* is a very powerful cymbal, even when not played on the bell. However, it can be a bit "clanky." It sounds best when played with a heavier stick, which would be the type a drummer playing heavy rock or metal would use. In a large club or arena situation, the *Mega Bell* would have no problem being heard. It

might also make a good second ride cymbal for drummers who need that extra volume and projection at certain points in a performance. I liked playing Latin-type cowbell patterns on it because I could play things fast with a light touch, and the cymbal's excellent projection made what I was playing very easy to hear. Even though there are a few different ways to use this cymbal, it is primarily

a ride cymbal for drummers who play loud. The Z series *Mega Bell Ride* lists for \$248.00.

On the other end of the sonic spectrum is Zildjian's new K *Custom Dry Ride*. This 20" cymbal is designed specifically for softer musical settings where a controlled sound from a ride cymbal is required. The first thing you notice about the *Custom Dry Ride* is its look: It's ugly, and it even feels a bit gritty. Years ago some drummers talked about how they would buy a new cymbal,



bury it in the backyard for six months, and then *and only then* would it be ready to be taken to a gig. I think this cymbal would definitely appeal to those drummers!

In all seriousness, this is a beautiful-sounding cymbal. The stick sound is very dry, and it has a low tone that is very warm. Its bell, unlike the one on the *Mega Bell Ride*, is small, but the sound is good. It has a low pitch and is also pretty clear, even though the bell doesn't project too loudly. In a small group, trio, or other small ensemble this cymbal would work perfectly. What's great is that you can really lay into it without it getting too loud or having the overtones build up too much. For this reason it could possibly be excellent for recording.

To give you an idea of the sound of this cymbal, try to imagine a low-pitched ride cymbal that hasn't been cleaned for a few years and that has a few pieces of tape on it. That's about how dry it is! I found this cymbal to be a real pleasure to play, and it's nice to play a cymbal that has as much character as this one. The list price for the K *Custom Dry Ride* is \$262.00.

—William F. Miller

Sabian HH Classic Rides

It often amazes us how many new products are designed to copy or recall old ones. We've seen any number of cymbals over the years that are supposed to recapture the "old K" sound, and a variety of snare drums modeled after the *Radio King* snare drum of the '40s. And it's not just drums—guitars are frequently claiming to sound like "pre-CBS Fenders."

Now, continuing the tradition of basing a new model on an old sound, Sabian has introduced the HH *Classic Ride* cymbals. According to the Sabian literature, these cymbals are meant to appeal to drummers who "have been seeking the elusive and highly prized 'traditional' cymbal sound popularized by the great drummers of the '40s, '50s, and '60s."

That covers a lot of ground, depending on who you were listening to in that 30-year span. (Buddy Rich's A Zildjians? Elvin Jones's K's? Joe Morello's Paistes?) In the Sabian promo photo, the cymbal is shown with a couple of pages from Jim Chapin's *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer*, which deals with bebop drumming. Based on that, then, one might expect these cymbals to be another attempt at the "old K" sound.

But they're not. As a Sabian representa-

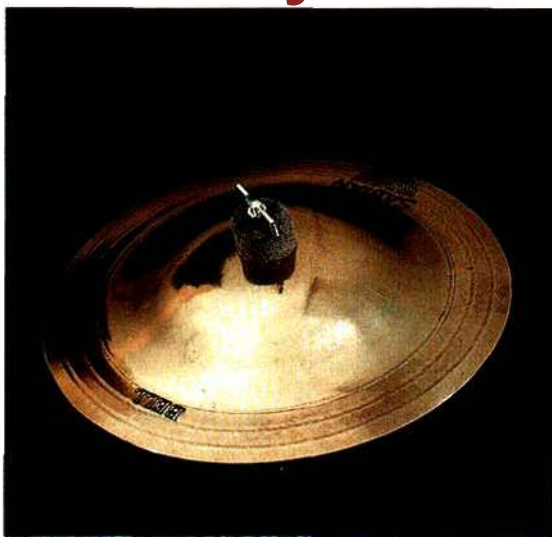


Sabian Bell Cymbal

Sabian has come up with a fun new item they call their *Bell* cymbal. It's about 12" in diameter, and almost all of that 12" is taken up by its steep bell shape. The cymbal is very heavy and produces a loud, bell-like "clang" that is piercing. It's designed primarily as an effects cymbal to be used by drummers playing louder styles of music and who want a cutting bell sound.

The sound of the *Bell* is somewhat similar to that of a bell found on a heavy ride cymbal, without having some of the "body" that a regular cymbal has. It has a completely different sound than that of Zildjian's *Mega Bell Ride*. But, like the *Mega Bell Ride*, it can be used for ride patterns, and because of its smaller size, the *Bell* is very easy to position on the kit. Also, Sabian's *Bell* cymbal does not have an exact pitch, like a crotale, for instance. According to Sabian, Richie Hayward from Little Feat uses one of these cymbals in his setup alongside his splash cymbals for individual accent effects. That's probably the best application for it.

Sabian sent us two *Bell* cymbals for re-



view, and as an experiment Rick Van Horn tried mounting them on a hi-hat stand as you would a normal pair of hi-hat cymbals. The results were a bit bizarre, even for Rick, but interesting. They had a very cutting stick sound along with a loud open sound. It's not very practical, but for drummers who have a second hi-hat stand (remote), it might be something different to try. The list price for the *Bell* is \$99.00.

—William F. Miller

live told us at a NAMM show, "We weren't trying to get that specific sound. We were just going for something that sounded good." So at this point we don't really know what the "classic" designation refers to.

But we don't really care, because the only thing that matters is what they sound like. First, the *Classic* ride is available in two sizes, 20" and 22". Compared to regular Sabian HH rides, the *Classic* rides have a higher pitch and brighter sound. They still have that darker characteristic of hand-hammered cymbals, but overall we felt that these cymbals had more in common with AAs than with HHs. They are available with either standard or Brilliant finishes. Predictably, the Brilliant-finished ones are a little mellower.

One reason for the brighter overtones on the *Classic* rides is the fact that they have fairly large bells. The bells produced reasonably clear tones, which was not a trait of old K's, but which should make these cymbals more popular with contemporary drummers.

These cymbals seem to be very thin around the edges, which results in large, rippling vibrations when the cymbal is played, even at moderate volumes. That thinness might also account for the slight lack of projection we sensed when playing

the cymbals in a band setting next to Sabian AAs. HH *Classic* cymbals will probably appeal more to drummers who play in low- to medium-volume situations.

We noticed something with some of the cymbals that wasn't necessarily a problem, but that was distracting at times: Some of them produced a very noticeable undertone. It was less obvious on the Brilliant ones, and not evident at all in a large room or when played with a medium-volume band. But it tended to be annoying in a small room when the cymbals were played by themselves. For that reason, we wouldn't recommend purchasing one of these through mail order. Go to a shop that will let you play it before you buy it.

To sum up, these cymbals seemed to split the difference between the current HH and AA cymbals—brighter than HHs, but darker than AAs. If we were naming these cymbals, rather than give them an ambiguous name like "Classic," we might just call them "HH Brights." But names aside, for those who have felt that the answer to their ride cymbal needs is somewhere between an HH and an AA, this might be the perfect solution.

—Rick Mattingly and Rick Van Horn

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by Peter Erskine

Further Thoughts On Playing *Free*

Photo by Rick Malkin



Recently while in Europe, I was in the recording studio with East-German born pianist Joachim Kuhn. Two of Joachim's favorite English words are the adjectives "burning" and "free." Perhaps you can guess what the music was like. I recall these words being used in more of a qualitative than quantitative sense. Anyway, the directions he gave the band were simply this: 1. "Let's not talk about it," and 2. "...playing free will make you happy." (I had been grumbling as to when we were going to break for lunch.)

Oftentimes, the impression that people have about free music is that it is a jumbled mass of notes and events. However, as the tape started to roll, this particular performance began to unfold delicately; the music was transparent, pleasant to listen to, and creative. We made a good take (and then I got to eat lunch).

I would like to go over a few of the aesthetic possibilities that we may encounter and enjoy when playing free or open styles of music. As I stated in my last article (*MD*, 6/89), it is essential to "listen to everything that the other musicians are playing, and respond appropriately, as your taste and experience can determine. Summon up patience and courage. Experiment. Discover the hidden architecture in spontaneously composed music."

Space, *patience*, and *balance* have become some of the most important words in my musical vocabulary. These words represent, to me, the elements of mature music-making. *Space* means to leave breathing room for your own and the other musi-

cians' notes. This will involve the use of *rests*. In much of the music that I really enjoy playing and listening to, the *rests* are the best notes (not) played! *Patience* goes hand in hand with *rests*, as well as being an essential ingredient of the development of any piece of music. Sometimes it is best (and crucial) to bide your time and make your musical statements at their proper time. *Balance* ensures that the notes, rests, ideas, and relative dynamics of the different instruments speak in true accord.

Other components of this music may include the use of colors, or textural shadings on the various parts of the drumset. A good example of this would be the use of brushes to "imply" the time—where the forward velocity of the music is determined by the ebb and flow, i.e., the motion of the brush strokes. The pulse here is neither regular nor obvious. Textures and colors can also be provided by flurries and clusters of notes. Velocity, hence forward motion, is easily sensed here. Another device is to change the tempo at will, speeding up and slowing down the quarter-note pulse (at whim) to achieve the desired effect.

What is the desired effect? To make a highly personal musical statement, and to be modern! One of the purposes of art is to make it possible for people to look at something familiar in a new light. Developments in both jazz and classical musics have made this provocatively possible. In classical music, the musical possibilities were opened up by the creation of "aleatory" music. The *Harvard Dictionary Of Music* defines this as "Music in which the composer introduces elements of chance or unpredictability with regard to either the composition or its performance...Chance may be involved in the process of composition, in performance, or both. In the composition process, pitches, durations, degrees of intensity, etc., and/or their distribution in time may be chosen by dice throwing, interpretations of abstract designs (Cage), etc., or according to certain mathematical laws of chance (Xenakis). In performance, chance is allowed to operate by leaving some elements and/or their order of appearance to the performer's discretion (Boulez, Stockhausen, *et al*), thus introducing the idea of *choice*. Most of these procedures are derived from and motivated by new general concepts of music, according to which form and structure are no longer

regarded as definitely fixed and final but as subject to partial or total transformations from one performance to another (open forms, mobile forms). The composers adhering to such ideas are part of a general movement—in science and philosophy as well as in the arts—that tends to consider, and therefore to express, the world in terms of possibility rather than necessity." I quote this definition excerpt at length, because 1. I like it, and 2. it makes me smile to think that jazz has known this all along. Anyway, the aesthetics and sounds from classical free, or aleatory, music have most certainly found their way into modern jazz expression.

In the context of the performance (or recording) of a piece of free music, I think that it is a good idea to remember that tension and release are key factors in a music's success. Tension and release can be expressed as a V7 chord resolving to I, or as a kinetic (and possibly frenetic?) piece of creativity resolving to a purer, cleaner, triumphantly clear passage—expressed tonally, harmonically, and/or rhythmically. *Balance*.

With freedom comes responsibility, and a need for discipline. There also comes the opportunity for a full range of expression. (I wonder, though, if it is okay for someone to do the musical equivalent of yelling "FIRE!" in a crowded movie theater.) Anyway, back to that recording session in Germany.... More and more, I find myself in playing situations where the musicians will not discuss what it is that's about to be played. No particular song will be in mind; tempos or keys are not talked about or considered. The muse (inspiration/creation/God) strikes, and, if the ego is not in the way, the music will start to flow. Creativity and ideas are sparked in the other players. What can happen? It's like several people meeting all at once, and starting a discussion, where no agenda or outline has been prepared or must be observed. In the ideal state, it's not the musicians' fingers that are doing the talking, I believe it's the musicians' souls that are directly communicating with each other—every player's combined wealth of listening, longings, happiness, sadness, knowledge, technique (= language), love, and a playful sense of being alive. When we play music, we are really playing everything that we've ever been, and everything that we hope to be.



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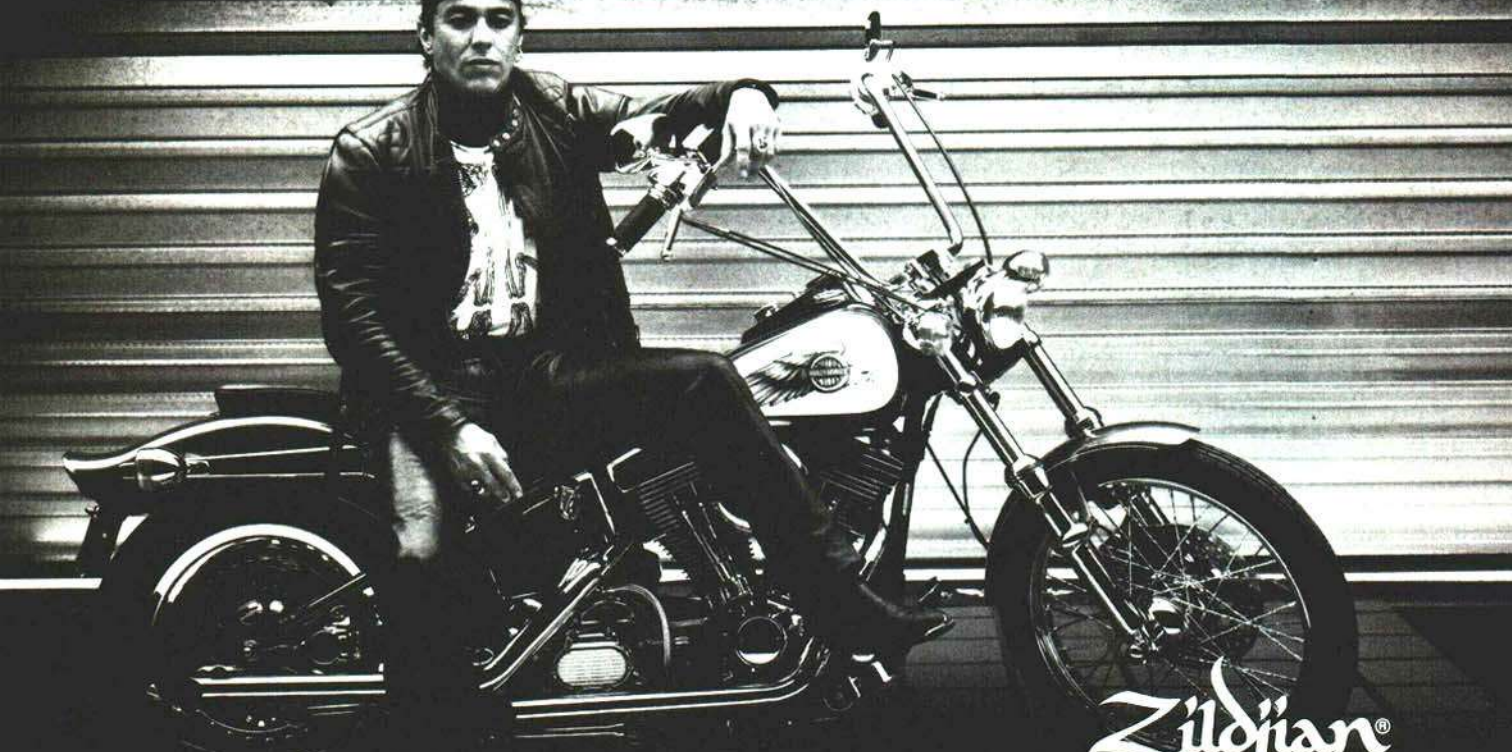
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Believe In Yourself by Roy Burns

There is an old saying that goes, "Believe in yourself, because if you don't, no one else will." Believing in yourself is essential in being successful. Unfortunately, when we are young we tend to be impatient. If we don't get success quickly, we often get discouraged. But another old saying goes, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." If your first attempt doesn't succeed, you may need to alter your goals or change your approach. At the very least, learn from your mistakes, and try again.

Standing in front of the mirror, saying "I am the world's greatest drummer" may be positive thinking, but just saying it won't make it so. (Besides, there is no way to decide who the world's greatest drummer might be. There are too many good drummers and too many styles for one person to do it all.) Your goals must be realistic. Be honest with yourself. In fact, be *brutally* honest. What are your goals and what will you need to do to achieve them? Start by assessing your weaknesses. What areas do you need to improve? Are you organized? Are you on time? Do you have the equipment you need, such as a good kit and

good cymbals?

Next, what are your strong points? For example, you might have a good time feel, but your reading and technique may leave something to be desired. Ask around, find a good teacher, and improve those elements of your playing. When you set your goals, say simply, "This year I am going to improve my reading and technique."

Another strong point might be that you already have some good playing experience under your belt. This is a definite plus, because there is no substitute for experience. Now, try to figure out how to *build on* that experience. Think of ways to improve and to broaden your abilities.

Write things down! Putting your goals on paper makes them more visible. Are they realistic? Some may seem foolish or immature when you see them written out. On the other hand, some may seem a little less scary. Some may even seem more attainable than you first thought.

Next, write down what you think you might be required to do to achieve your goals. You might decide to go to a famous music school or study with a famous drummer/teacher. You might decide that you need to organize your practice time or to practice more consistently.

After you have completed the list of things you need to do to succeed, you must decide what to do first. Which idea is most important? Which one is within your means and/or capabilities right now?

Now that you have put all this on paper, you have goals and some ideas as to how to achieve them. Do you believe that you *can* achieve them? If you don't believe in yourself, you won't succeed—even if you try.

I had a friend who desperately wanted to play pro baseball. However, he kept saying to me, "I won't make it. I just know I won't." As a matter of fact, he didn't make it.

Of course, it's possible to believe in yourself and *still* not achieve your goals. For example, very few boxers go undefeated. Yet many believe they can win just one more fight—even though friends and advisors tell them no. Sugar Ray Leonard came out of retirement to beat Marvelous Marvin Hagler in a fight that the experts said shouldn't have been allowed. They all said Leonard would be destroyed. But Leonard

believed in himself. He also worked hard. He was in great condition, and he had a plan. He was ready.

The fight was a split decision: two judges for Leonard and one for Hagler. It could easily have gone the other way, and Leonard would have had nothing to be ashamed of. As it was, Hagler had nothing to be ashamed of. Sometimes you do your best, but you just don't win. Sometimes you play great at an audition, but someone else gets the job. Well, those are the breaks—just like in boxing. Remember, even the winner of the Leonard-Hagler match lost almost half the rounds. Another old saying goes, "I may have lost a battle, but I haven't lost the war."

Before Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile, all the experts said it was an impossible feat; the bone structure of the human body would not permit it. However, the year after Bannister broke the four-minute mile, 37 other runners broke it. One year after that, 300 runners broke the four-minute mile. The human body hadn't changed. Roger Bannister had changed everyone's attitude, including that of all the so-called experts. Bannister accomplished this with effort and training, and, above all, by believing in himself.

Believing in yourself allows you to do something substantial and meaningful. You may have to try more than one thing until you find what works for you. Many of us started out with a dream and a drumset. As we developed, some of us discovered that we could do other things as well, such as running a drum shop, running a magazine for drummers, writing articles such as this one, producing other artists, starting a record company, or leaving the road to do studio work.

To me, in order to succeed, you have to try. In order to try, you must believe in yourself. You may have to adjust your goals; you may need to make changes in what you want to achieve as your life develops. What is important to you at 15 may not be as important when you are 40. Other things may become more important to you as you grow older.

Believing in yourself is the first and most important step in being successful. What is being successful? For me, it is being the best you can be. I believe that I can be the best Roy Burns in the world. Does that mean I am the greatest? *Certainly not!* It just means that I believe I can continually grow, develop, learn, improve, and enjoy life, just believe that you—and only you—can be the best you. That's the first step!

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Playing At High Volume

In the *Health And Science* department of the August '88 *MD*, I wrote an article called "Playing Loud—Staying Healthy." In it, I discussed some of the physical dangers inherent in loud playing, and how to avoid them. This time, I'll focus on the drumset and its relationship to the modern P.A. system, and the technique one must acquire in order to be able to play at high volume.

Our instrument has kept pace with the changes in music and technology. Ride cymbals are larger and heavier; many crash cymbals are bright, with quick decay. These cymbals "cut" through amplifiers and P.A. systems, and are more easily heard by both band and audience members. Snare drums are designed to produce more volume, and a new generation of high-tech heads are able to withstand the pounding they receive night after night. The bass drum—minus its front head and with the proper padding—provides an aggressive, less reverberant sound. Its superior forward projection is more easily discerned on and off the stage, and is easier to mike.

In certain situations the entire drumset is miked. This helps the drummer keep up with amplifiers and P.A. and is a necessity if a loud band desires a full, present drum sound. However, miking the drums does *not* excuse the drummer from actually *playing* at a high volume. Here's why:

First, in a high-volume situation, a drum struck softly—or even at a moderate volume—does not project through a microphone with sufficient power. The sound engineer can make it *loud*, but it will still lack *power*. Second, at times when the musicians are denied the luxury of having drums in the monitors, the drummer might as well be unmiked. Sheer volume is necessary for the other musicians to hear the drums, and even for the drummer to be able to hear *him/herself*! (This is an amazing feeling—to be slugging away and still be unable to hear yourself!) It may be helpful to have some (or all) of the drums in the monitors, but in many cases the monitor system is either incapable of producing a good drum sound, or there are not enough mixes (or enough time) to allow this "luxury." Third, the rest of the band looks to the drummer as the time source, and even as an energy source for the entire ensemble. In addition to playing clear, well-defined time, he/she must project a sense of confident authority. Simply playing loudly is not a cheap *substitute* for this intangible quality; it derives from the player's innermost self and mastery of the instrument. (In fact, even at the lowest volumes, drummers must radiate the same confidence and authority.) *But*, it is essential for drummers to be able to use volume to their advantage. If the

other musicians cannot properly hear the drums, the time—and ultimately the drummer's authority—will be undermined.

Proper, relaxed hand technique is crucial in every aspect of drumming, and high-volume playing is no exception. What constitutes "proper" technique is open for debate, and may vary from individual to individual, or from teacher to teacher. But a basic aspect of technique that seems frequently forgotten or dismissed when playing loudly is *the stick rebounding off the head*. As we find ourselves explaining far too often, drummers do not merely *hit* drums. We *draw the sound out* with our sticks and hands. In attempting to draw the best possible sound from a drum, the drummer must be able to execute a controlled rebound. To draw out the *maximum* amount of sound, it is necessary to incorporate a larger hand/arm motion in both striking and rebounding. *The stick must still be allowed to respond to the head's natural bounce*. When the player restricts the stick's natural rebound, energy from the stroke cannot flow smoothly. Unnecessary shock and stress flow back through the arm, and the sound that is "drawn out" will not be the fullest, best possible sound. Some of the wasted energy is transferred from the hand and arm to the drumhead, resulting in dented heads. Dents add unwanted overtones to the sound of a head, as well as shortening its life span. A drummer who is relaxed and able to control the rebound at high volumes will inflict a significantly lesser amount of damage to a head.

Obviously, there are different ways to "draw" sound from a drum; and some produce more volume than others. Playing a rimshot on the snare drum is a reliable way of producing a lot of sound. You may or may not want to always use a rimshot for the backbeat. A rimshot lacks the tone I desire in a backbeat, and I find that playing it *exclusively* is overly stressful to the hand and arm. But there *are* occasions when I believe it to be the best choice—the authoritative "crack" is easily heard, and is quite often musically appropriate.

Drummers who are unaccustomed to loud playing may initially notice a reduction in their control over the instrument. The tendency is to flail at the drums, frequently missing the "sweet spot." Control can be restored by practicing large, *slow* strokes in various combinations on the drums. The goal is to develop more accurate "muscle memory" that will enable you to play precisely at new levels of intensity. In addition, a certain amount of practice time should be devoted to actually playing at the desired level(s). Try to see each stroke into the center of the head. Listen for good

tonal quality, always allowing the stick to bounce. This effort will translate into increased accuracy and confidence at high volumes. Keep in mind that it is entirely possible to strike a drum *too hard*, causing it to "choke." Besides being a waste of energy, the drum doesn't speak well. Look for that fine line between the maximum volume/tone/power, and the point at which the drum chokes. It is a matter of "feel," and will differ between instruments.

Drummers must learn how to adjust their volume on a variety of levels. In learning to play *drums* more powerfully, you must avoid overplaying the *cymbals*. For example, an overplayed ride cymbal will "roar," producing too much sound. It becomes difficult for the other musicians to distinguish where the time is. Special care should be taken if you like to occasionally ride with the *shoulder* of the stick; it is very easy to lose control of a cymbal when it is responding to a stick's total mass. The hi-hat will also "roar" if it is played too loosely; drummers who desire this sound should seek a good balance of looseness and definition. If you are able to pick and choose among your cymbals, avoid using your thin crash cymbals on a very loud gig. They will last for a while, but sooner or later they may succumb to the pounding and develop cracks.

Perhaps the most obvious way to increase your volume is by increasing the size of your sticks. A larger, more massive stick will instantly produce more volume, but not without exacting a price. The new stick may seem slower and more cumbersome. You must resist the temptation to compensate for this by playing more stressfully. Also (and especially if your hands are slightly built), there is a chance that a heavy stick will overtire your hands, exposing you to potential injury. This is another decision for the individual. It is not imperative to use a heavy stick to play loudly if you acquire the technique described above. If you feel that a heavier stick *is* necessary, work up to larger sizes gradually, in the same way that a weightlifter works up to heavier weights.

As popular music has evolved, the technical and physical requirements of both drummers and drumset have been transformed. Today, drummers are frequently called upon to play at unprecedented volumes, and adapting to the circumstances of the times requires new techniques to complement long-established traditions. Being consistent, relaxed, and creative while playing loudly has become essential technique, and should be approached in a careful, relaxed fashion.



Rikki Rockett



**MORE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT DRUMMERS
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Fred Coury



Photo by Ebet Roberts



Chris, Ziggy Marley, and Tina Weymouth

yourself more as a producer than a drummer?

CF: What I get off on most is playing live. To me, there's simply nothing more exciting. I love to go out and play in a live setting. We just did a Tom Tom Club tour of Europe; it was so great. With the exception of one or two things, I hadn't been onstage for five and a half years prior to the *Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom* tour, which began, I guess you could say, at CBGB's. I was really missing it. But we were also very nervous. We did those gigs at CBGB's last fall and got so taken with them. It was like 15 nights to warm up for the European tour. I loved the whole experience of touring again. I could do that six or eight months out of the year. And if I never produced a record again, I wouldn't care. But, on the other hand, there is something satisfying about producing a record.

I'm not quite sure I know what a record producer is, actually. I think for every rec-

ord made, a different definition of "producer" is applied. If being a producer means being the person who is ultimately responsible for making sure that the best stuff gets on the tape and that the artist is happy and the record company is happy and the project goes well and doesn't get interrupted for foolish reasons, then I think I can handle that. I don't ever kid myself and think that I'm a Quincy Jones or someone like that. I'm not one who can write a horn arrangement off the top of my head that sounds fabulous. I'd be more inclined to hire a horn player to do that for me.

But being a producer is a good, honorable way to make a living. Tina and I like to think that we'll only work on projects that are really special to us. We have enough to do already without going out and listening to a lot of demo tapes and new bands. We prefer to work with bands and acts we both consider special. I mean, if Ziggy Marley is the only act we work

with outside of the Tom Tom Club and Talking Heads, why, that would be fine.

RS: As a drummer, have you absorbed much about the way Jamaican drummers ply their trade? Are you influenced by reggae rhythms?

CF: I can't help but think that it must have a big influence on me, although I never really tried to cop a Jamaican drum style note for note. I've always thought Jamaican drummers play reggae so much better than I ever could. I've never done a really straight reggae tune, because, quite frankly, I think bands like the Police have done it enough. To me it always sounded like white people playing reggae. [laughs] Sly Dunbar once said to me, "Y'know, Chris, I love it when you play in a rock style." [laughs] And I love it when he plays in a reggae style. So I guess we feel the same way about music. I try to keep my own playing so that it has lots of air in it and is able to work well with a percussionist. If that percussionist is African or Jamaican, or simply comes from Brooklyn, I want my style of drumming to be open enough and have room for whatever it is he or she will contribute to the music. I'm most interested in establishing a fine-tuned working relationship with the musicians I play with.

RS: Talking Heads have experimented with non-rock rhythms on a number of occasions, and so has the Tom Tom Club.

CF: I think it's important to listen to a lot of different things. It's like when you're growing up and you're learning to read, it's good to read the classics, but it's also good to read trash. I really like all different kinds of stuff. I must say, though, that I lean toward the more funky or the more ethnic stuff. But I can also appreciate the drummer from, say, Whitesnake. I think it's very important, as they say, to keep an open mind.

RS: Where do you go for inspiration? Do you have favorite drummers?

CF: I get my inspiration wherever I can find



These will make

it. When I'm feeling dry, I listen to James Brown records. I always go back to James Brown.

RS: What are your drumming roots? Are you a schooled drummer?

CF: I started off in grade school. Having tried several instruments, I ended up with the drums. Well, they gave me a little pad in the sixth grade, along with a book. Then in junior high school—seventh and eighth grades—I was in the school band. After that I was mostly in little bands that practiced in the basements of suburban homes in Pittsburgh. The Beatles had come out and changed everything by this time. My parents got me a drumkit for Christmas so that I could start to learn how to play kit-style drums. Before that it was marching parade drumming with the snare drum. I really loved playing the drums, but I never felt I could make a living at it, or that I could be a success. I always felt that there was a different breed of person who became a professional drummer and actually made records. The feeling of wanting to play the drums persisted in me, but so did my lack of confidence. So I wound up going to art school to study painting and art in general. Art was the other thing in my life that sort of paralleled music. But eventually I missed the drums so much that I got my drumset out of the basement of my parents' home.

RS: So you actually went through a period when you weren't playing drums at all?

CF: Yes, that's right. It was a rather long period, too. In my sophomore year at college I had to learn to play all over again. I'd put on Al Green or David Bowie or Stones records and play along with them in my apartment. I did that until I could sort of play a little bit. Then I joined a band. About that time David Byrne and I worked in a band together called the Artisticks. I've

kept playing since then. I think I've gotten better. Yet I still feel I'm a drummer of very limited technical skills. But I think I have a lot of spirit. I hope that makes up for anything Steve Gadd can do that I can't. [laughs]

RS: This brings up that classic argument over which drummer is more effective: the drummer who is technically perfect, but

"It's fine to borrow ideas from other artists as long as you contribute something that is unique to yourself."

who possesses limited "feel," or the drummer who, more or less, is unschooled and plays from the heart. People who enjoy perpetrating that argument would probably put you in the latter category.

CF: Probably. But I don't think that formal training in music would stifle a musician, particularly a drummer. On the other hand, the way I came up—with an art school background—taught me above all else that it is of the utmost importance that you contribute something uniquely unto yourself. If you're working on a song or a painting or a novel, it's fine to borrow ideas from other artists. I mean, if your favorite band is the Beatles and you want to use some ideas that are Beatle-esque in your song, that's fine. There's nothing wrong with that—as long as you contribute something to that song that is unique to yourself. Above anything else, that is the most important thing I learned in art school. To be just good at technique doesn't get it. In fact, at our school it used to be something of a per-

verse compliment or a backhanded compliment to say, "Oh, he has great technique." It's like when you go to hear a band and you really hate what it's all about musically and someone asks you what you thought of the band, you say, "Oh, they were really tight." [laughs] So, from my point of view, I can understand and appreciate great technique. But technique and a dollar will get you on the subway.

RS: When you listen to Talking Heads records, which albums or songs are you most proud of?

CF: Gee, I don't know. There are so many to choose from. [laughs] I like "Take Me To The River." I like "Blind" and "Ruby Dear" from the last album. I really like "Stay Up Late" off *Little Creatures*. These are songs that I really enjoy listening to. When I hear them I say to myself, "Good drums!"

RS: Stylistically, what are the components that go into your playing?

CF: I have a tendency to ride the hi-hat in a very straight way. Actually, I'd like to get more complicated. Robert Palmer once said to me, "Chris, your foot is really great, but your hi-hat is in submission." [laughs] I always try to think of little things to do on the hi-hat, but I keep going back to the basics, which always works. So that's one thing that's part of my drumming signature. Another is the distinct absence of fills. It used to be that every time I did a fill, I would speed up tempo. So finally I just said to myself, "Well, rather than speeding up when I do a fill, I just won't play any." I think I've found over the years that I most enjoy a style of drumming that is relatively uncluttered. You might even call it simple.

RS: But simple in the spirit of some of the great Motown and Memphis drummers. Al Jackson comes to mind.

CF: You know, I didn't even know who Al Jackson was, but I used to love the stuff

you feel good.

A reporter once asked Louis Armstrong, "What is jazz?" He replied, "If you have to ask the question, you'll never know the answer."

For a drummer, the same is true of "feel." It is not so much technical as it is spiritual. You've either got it, or you haven't. And no drumsticks in the world can give it to you.

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Booker T. & the MGs cut. To me Jackson gave just enough space so one could hear every other instrument in the song in a way that was, I don't know, just very groovy.

RS: Let's talk about equipment. You play Tama drums live, but you use a Rogers drumkit in the studio.

CF: That's right. I got that Rogers kit when Talking Heads signed its first record deal. It's been 11 years. The kit has been sort of retired, since I leave it at home whenever we tour. But I still use it in the studio. I use a Tama kit live. Actually I have accumulated several sets of Tama drums over the years. I've found that Tama has the best hardware. It's quite capable of taking a good beating. When you're on the road, that's one of the most important things. But my

Rogers set makes it onto the records. In fact, it's represented on all Talking Heads' records.

RS: What's the kit comprised of?

CF: It's got three tom-toms—two rack and one floor—a bass drum, a hi-hat, and two Zildjian crash cymbals, 16" and 18". I don't use ride cymbals, though sometimes I'll ride a crash cymbal.

RS: And is your Tama set essentially the same configuration?

CF: Yes, it is. Although if you ever saw the Talking Heads movie, *Stop Making Sense*, you might have noticed that instead of using floor toms, I used timbales. I like the crack they produce. It sounds real good every once in a while. Also, I'm not one of those drummers who has to use a particu-

lar snare or else I can't play. But recently I've been using a piccolo snare, which I like a lot. I used a piccolo snare on *Naked* and just about all the new Tom Tom Club stuff.

RS: What is it about piccolo snares that you like?

CF: I love the higher snare sound you get from them. After using great big snare drums for a long time, it's nice to play a little one. They are a little on the fragile side, though. I have to use *Lug Locks* with my snare. Boy, what did we ever do before *Lug Locks* came along? Thank God for those little pieces of plastic! [laughs] I also have to put a piece of tape on that knob that tightens and loosens up the snare so that it doesn't come loose after constant banging.

RS: Let's switch gears a little bit. What do you foresee occurring with Talking Heads in the next year or two?

CF: We just signed a new contract with Warner Bros. for another five albums. So I definitely see Talking Heads continuing as a recording band. I'm very confident that we'll continue to make great records. I think the band has a wonderful chemistry. And at this point we have enough confidence in ourselves so that we don't hesitate to augment ourselves with other players. I mean, on *Naked* we used African percussionists, accordion players.... So I'm sure the records we make in the future will continue to be great. I wish I could say we'll be touring a lot, but I can't. And that's disappointing because I feel that making records is only

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half the gig. I think you should take your music to the stage and you should shake your booty, as they say. Not everyone in Talking Heads agrees with me on that one. So we'll see what happens.

RS: You mentioned working with African percussionists on the *Naked* album. What was it like working with percussionists from another culture?

CF: It was easy and it was great. What we did was record song ideas onto cassettes here in New York. The band got together for three weeks to rehearse before we left for Paris to record the album. We put together all these musical ideas—basically whatever came into our heads. Then, when we got to Paris, we sat down in the studio and put the ideas together that we thought fit, and arranged them into A, B, and C sections of a song. Then our friend Wally Badarou, who lives in Paris and also at Compass Point, had arranged for us to meet a lot of musicians. I guess the word got out that Talking Heads was looking for some African dudes [laughs] because plenty of them turned up.

My favorite guy that we worked with was Abdu Mboup. He's Senegalese and just wonderful. He's a true Griot. You can't become one; you have to be born into a Griot family. I would sit down with him and we would just play together and get something going, and the rest of the band would eventually join in. He played on the basic rhythm tracks; his parts weren't overdubbed or anything. So the whole experience was really very special.

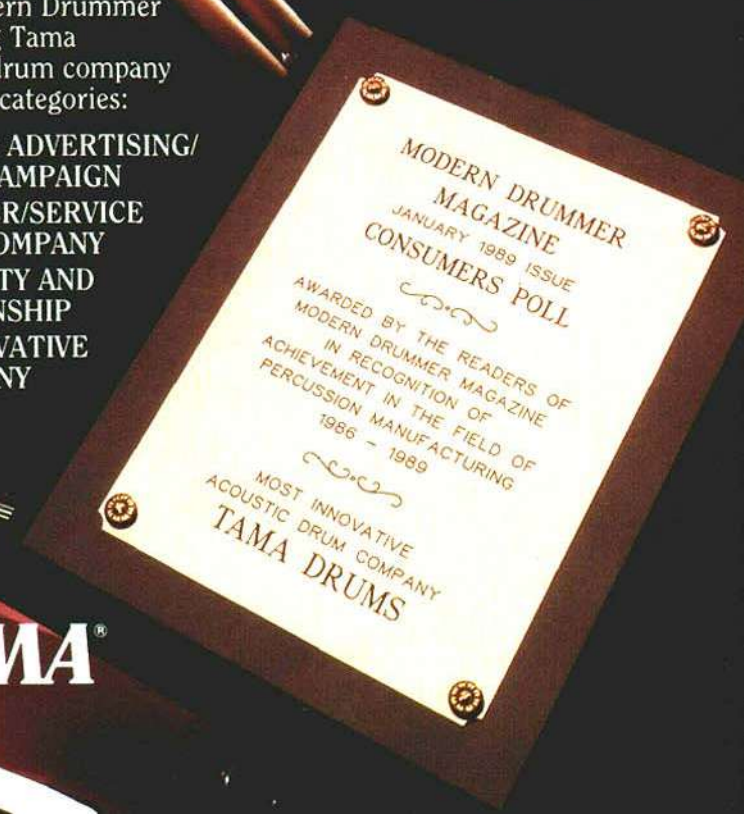
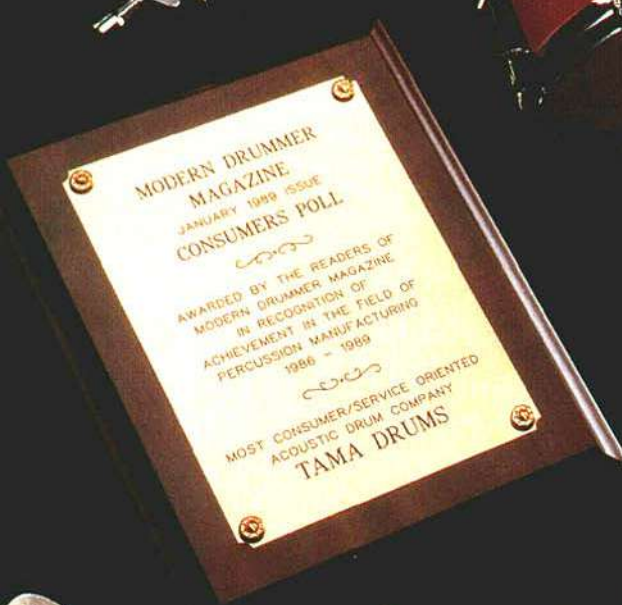
RS: Is there any chance of doing something similar in the future?

CF: I certainly would love to do it again. If Talking Heads doesn't do it, then maybe I'll do it with the Tom Tom Club. The Tom Tom Club is now a real band; in addition to Tina and myself we have guitarist Mark Roule and keyboards player Gary Pozer. They're both from New York. What I'd like to do with these guys is what we did with Talking Heads—namely, come up with basic structures of songs and song ideas and then go to a place like Paris or Jamaica or Rio or who knows, and get local musicians to augment the music. It's really fun to work this way. Whether Talking Heads works that way in the future, I don't know. But I think Tina and I will.

RS: Talking Heads has made a truly significant contribution to American rock 'n' roll. Certainly its place in the music's history is a prominent one. Are you satisfied with the band's accomplishments? Are you satisfied with your own accomplishments within the band?

CF: Yes, I'm pleased with what we've done and with what I've done. But, you know, there's always something. No matter how great something is, there's always something that bugs you. But I'll tell you, I really shouldn't grumble. I think I've been a lucky guy. Part of it has been because I've surrounded myself with good people. You're only as good as your partners.



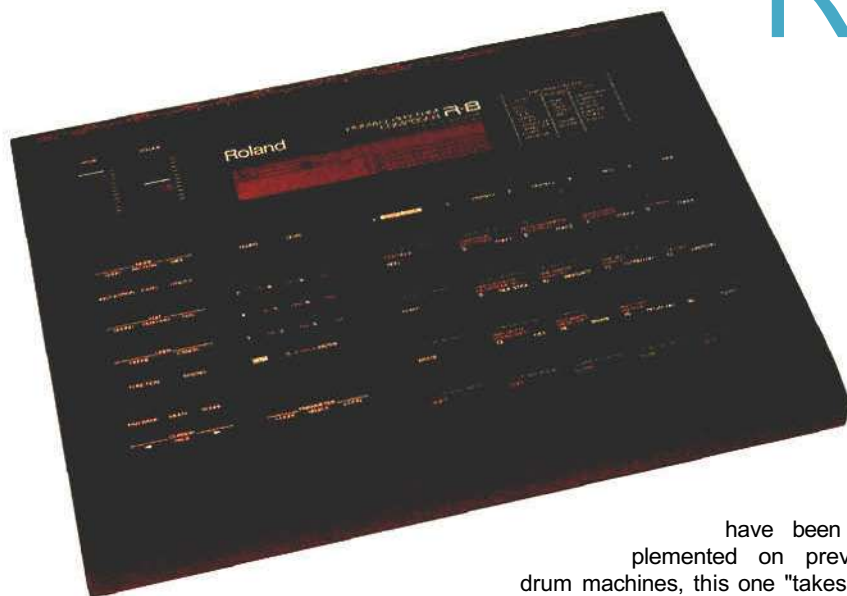


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R8 Human



I'M SURE YOU'VE read the pre-release hype about Roland's new *R8 Human Rhythm Composer*, or at least heard about this drum machine that is designed to imitate the feels and grooves of a "live" musician. But, while the human element programmed into this machine is its biggest advertising hook, it is not the *R8*'s only feature. The first time I pushed the power switch and saw the "Space Invader"-style welcoming screen on the display, I knew that this machine was going to be something special!

The *R8* weighs less than seven pounds, fits into a briefcase, and, with its matte black finish, looks real cool. It has all the paraphernalia you'd expect from a top-of-the-line drum machine: 16-bit samples, MIDI, sync modes, and everything else. If you want more basic information, get a brochure. I want to tell you about the important stuff.

Power

Back in the days of "beat boxes," things were pretty simple: Just push a button labeled "Rock 1" or "Swing 3" and everything was done for you. As drum machines (and electronic kits, for that matter) began to give the user more versatility, they became more complex. This isn't a negative, it's a positive. As long as the user-interface isn't too difficult to navigate and control, the increased power is well worth the extra time it takes to produce a finished product. The *R8* takes more time to learn than other drum machines, because it has the most powerful programming options of any drum machine currently on the market. While many of the features included on the *R8*

have been implemented on previous drum machines, this one "takes it to the max." Here are just a few examples:

Other drum machines have flam buttons. Simply hold down this button while you play one of the instrument buttons and, presto—an instant flam. The Korg *DDD5*, for example, allowed you to adjust the interval between the grace note and the primary note in ten increments. But the *R8* lets you adjust the flam interval in 32 steps. As if this weren't enough flexibility, the *R8* also lets you set the flam ratio (the difference in volume between the grace and the primary notes) to one of six different values. And the flam settings are memorized for each *pattern*, not for the entire machine.

Most drummers dislike the swing functions built into drum machines. The mechanical rigidity of "machine swing" is something akin to watching Sly Stallone play Hamlet: It just doesn't make it! If you're convinced that you would never use the swing function on a drum machine, you might want to play around with the *R8*'s swing parameters. You can select the "swing point" (the note value that is delayed) between quarters, 8ths, 16ths, and 32nds, as well as quarter, 8th, and 16th triplet values. You can also adjust the amount of delay. The delay time varies depending on the swing point you've chosen. At the slowest swing point, you've got 23 values, and at the fastest only two are available.

Well, you're starting to get the point, right? No matter what any other drum machine can do, the *R8* was designed to be able to do more (the "higher, faster, louder" syndrome).

Building Sounds

Let's take a look at how sounds are assigned to the play buttons. There are 16 instrument buttons (velocity and pressure sensitive) on the front panel of the *R8*. It's

easy to have more than 16 instruments at your disposal, due to the five different "pad banks." These banks (lettered from A to E) can be programmed to fire any sound from each of the 16 instrument buttons. For example, instrument button one in pad bank A might be a bass drum. The same instrument button might fire a cowbell in bank B or a metal pipe in bank C. Using this type of assignment, 80 different sounds can be fired in any pattern!

Sounds can be chosen from 68 internal samples that come with the machine, 26 "Copy Instruments," or 26 additional instruments that can be loaded into the *R8* from a ROM card. "Copy Instruments" are created by taking a factory sound and applying some of the abundant and diverse editing features that the *R8* has to offer.

Just what are those editing features? I'm glad you asked! Each sound can be adjusted in pitch from -4800 to +4800 cents in 10-cent increments. (Ten cents is one tenth of a semitone.) In theory, this gives each instrument a tunable range of eight octaves. In reality, however, this is not the case. On some drum machines and electronic kits that offer a wide tuning range, the upper and lower limits aren't very practical. At extremely low pitches, the samples take on a type of distortion called aliasing. At very high pitches, the samples tend to sound choked and "munchkin-like." The *R8* has solved this problem by applying certain upper and lower limits to some instruments. For example, the sound called "snap snare" has a lower limit of -4800, but an upper tuning range of just +1900. This feature has more positive results than negative, in that just about anything you create is going to sound usable.

Back to the editing features. You can control the decay of a sound from 0 to 127, the "nuance" in 15 steps, the output assignments to 15 places, and the output assignment type in 10 styles. You can also assign any one of eight different velocity curves. These features comprise a great deal of latitude, so let's take a quick look at each of them.

The decay of any sound can be set from 0-127, but some sounds have two decay settings. Many of the original samples in the *R8* seem to be comprised of two distinct parts. The first might be loosely termed the attack or the impact sound of the stick hitting the instrument, the second is the tone quality of the instrument itself. While all sounds aren't made up in this way, most of the bass drums, snare drums, and toms are.

Once you've set the relative decay of the two parts, you can control the "nuance."

Rhythm Composer

by
Norman
Weinberg

This is Roland's term for the relative volume between the two components of the sampled sound. This amounts to an increase in lower frequencies as the nuance value is increased and higher frequencies when decreased. With hi-hat and ride cymbal sounds, the effect of moving the stick from the outer edge to the cup can be created by increasing this parameter's value. Very slick!

The output assignments along with the output types available are among the most flexible and versatile I've ever seen. Each instrument can be routed to any of seven positions in the stereo field. If you plan to use the *R8* in a studio situation, any voice can be sent through one of the eight "multi" outputs. This way, you might send the ride and crash cymbals through one multi-out, the snare and bass drum to two others, and four toms through their own outputs.

The output type can be poly, mono, or use one of eight "exclusive" numbers. When in poly mode, a long sound (such as a crash cymbal) will not cancel itself out when played several times in quick succession. When using mono, an instrument will retrigger the sample each time the button is pressed. There are eight separate exclusive audio "channels" that can be called into play. When two sounds are assigned to the same exclusive number, one of them will cut off the decay of the other. This is very useful when you are using two different instruments that normally don't play together, such as open and closed hi-hats.

There are eight different velocity curves on the *R8*. They differ from the garden-variety velocity curve in that the timbre of the instrument actually changes as the button is played harder or softer. In other words, the curve does more than simply change the instrument button's feel.

One last groovy feature: When copying factory sounds into Copy Instruments, you can give each newly created instrument a name! If you've ever dreamed of turning on your drum machine and seeing the name "DeathSn" pop up for your killer snare sound, this is the machine for you.

The settings mentioned so far apply only to the "Instrument Edit" mode. If you go into the "Performance Edit" mode, you can make changes to the pitch, decay, nuance, and pan settings that override the instrument settings. This way, you can have the same instrument assigned to four or five different buttons, and adjust the tuning and other parameters of each button's sound. If you can think of a more flexible arrangement than that, let me know!

There are drum machines that use a "multi-mode" setting to spread the sound of one instrument across several play but-

tons, but none do it with the control of the *R8*. Push the Multi button, and a single sound is assigned to all 16 instrument buttons. By using another feature, called "Align," the performance parameters are evenly spaced across all the buttons. You can align the pitch, the decay, the nuance, or any combination. If you don't like the default values, you can override them by programming each button individually.

Building Patterns

Once you've assigned all the sounds to all the buttons and tweaked them to your heart's content, it's time to start building patterns. Although the *R8* comes with 32 factory-preset rhythm patterns, there is room for 100 more user-programmable patterns. The *R8* is equally at home in real-time or in step-time.

When programming in real-time, you can erase all instruments, a single instrument, or a single attack. You can set the metronome's level, output channel, note value, and mode (always on, always off, or on only if the pattern is currently empty). There is a familiar Roland-style graphic display on the LCD that shows up to four instruments at the same time.

Step-time programming took a little getting used to, but after a while, I kind of liked working in this mode. Actually, there are three different modes of step-time: "Basic" mode, "Normal Edit" mode, and "Scope Edit" mode. When in Basic mode, the 16 instrument buttons determine where a particular instrument's sound will fire. Select the bass drum sound, push buttons 1, 5, 9, and 13, and you've got "four on the floor" quarter notes. This makes step programming much more graphic than mathematical.

Okay, so we've got sound edits (affecting the sound of the sample) and performance edits (affecting the sound assigned to any particular instrument button). What could possibly come next? How about sequence parameters? When using the Normal Edit mode, sequence parameters can be called into play after a sound has been programmed into the pattern. When going into this mode, you can take any individual attack and change its velocity, pitch, decay, pan setting, and nuance. In addition, you can also adjust the "micro timing" to move any attack forward or backward by 1/384 of a quarter note! A quick phone call to the Roland technical support confirmed that when using this feature, there are really 384 divisions for each quarter. Talk about high-resolution editing! Let's just say that the *R8* will let you put a note anywhere you want!

There are many features available in pattern programming mode that will make your life as a programmer easier. For one thing, the LCD display feeds you quite a bit of information. You are given the pattern number, the number of measures contained in the pattern, the time signature, the quantize level, and the pattern's name!

Some of the more advanced features include: instrument change, which lets you swap one instrument for another; pattern append, for joining two patterns together; pattern extract, which lets you copy a specified instrument's data from one pattern to another (perfect for copying that happenin' hi-hat motion while leaving the rest of the data intact); pattern merge, which takes the data from two different patterns and combines them (yes, you read that correctly); pattern reframe, which moves the pattern's starting point to anywhere within the pattern; and pattern naming (up to eight letters).

Building Songs

The *R8* can hold up to ten songs, each with up to 999 different parts. You can delete a part, insert, or copy a part, copy an entire song, name the song, and set the song for continuous play. You can also program initial tempo and initial levels, then program changes to the tempo and level settings as a song part.

A few features in this area are really slick! You can label any part of a song, such as "Verse 1," "Bridge," "Chorus," etc. Once parts are labeled, you can search for a particular label to begin editing or playing. This is a handy feature if you only want to work on, say, the second verse.

Perhaps the hippest feature is called "Time Calculate." Previously only found on expensive computer sequencers, the Time Calculate functions let you determine how long it will take for the song to play through the last measure or any specified bar. You can ask the *R8* to display the performance's running time while you listen to the song. It even lets you set the tempo so that the song will be played within a specified amount of time. Does your song have to fit into a 30 second commercial slot? Just punch a few buttons and the *R8* will tell you the initial tempo to set.

The "Human" Feature

The single feature of the *R8* that is getting all the press is its ability to select one of eight different "feel" patches. A "feel" is the result of combining the "groove" of a pattern along with additional "random" changes. The groove is defined in the manual as regular changes of accent and tone

that a drummer purposely creates.

The groove is programmed by picking the number of notes whose accents should be changed (from one to eight). Next, the instruments (also up to eight) and the timing value of the note are selected. You can fine-tune the parameters such as velocity, pitch, decay, and nuance. Turn the groove switch on and, bingo: human style motions.

When programming the random factors into the equation, it's possible to select the probability and the "depth" of the irregular changes. Keep in mind that you don't have to use the random factor, as each of the eight instruments can turn this feature on or off for each of the parameters.

If you're wondering if the feel patch concept really works, the answer is yes. After playing around with it for a while, I was able to get patterns that sounded less mechanical and predictable. Using the feels, it's easy to turn a "ho-hum" pattern into something refreshingly new and different.

Additional Goodies

You know you're dealing with a computer when you begin to access "Macro" settings. Do you normally use a particular operation that may require several different steps and key presses? If so, then you can define a Macro and perform a complex operation with a single keystroke.

The R8 lets you define up to ten Macro Note settings. Each Macro Note can include up to 16 steps. Let's say that you're programming a song that is going to use a

particular rhythmic figure often. Just define that figure as a Macro, and call it up whenever you want to program that rhythm.

The other Macro feature, called "user functions," allows storage of up to 16 button procedures as a single Macro. You might use one of the user function Macros to begin playing a certain song from a certain measure. Or you could use it to erase a previously recorded pattern, set the time signature to 6/8, and establish a pattern length of one bar.

MIDI

As far as drum machines go, the R8 has the most complete MIDI implementation currently available. While other drum machines allow you to set the MIDI note numbers that will fire certain sounds, each instrument on the R8 can be programmed for a certain MIDI note number over any MIDI channel! If you're controlling other sound modules from the R8, or playing the R8 from other master controllers, you have everything you need. When programming note numbers, the display shows you the MIDI number as well as the pitch's name (i.e., 036-C1).

You can tell the R8 whether or not you want the machine to receive note-off messages (to stop a decaying sound when a key is let up), pan messages (controller number ten), program-change messages (which can be used to call up different patterns or change the feel patches), and system exclusive data. In addition, the R8 is one of the

first drum machines to make use of control-change messages. You can tell it to route the modulation wheel or general-purpose controllers to affect the pitch, decay, nuance, or pan settings of any instrument.

When in Performance Mode, the R8 acts very much like a synthesizer. If desired, you can use an external MIDI keyboard to play a single tom sound. Specify a zero point on the keyboard (let's just say that it's middle C) and a follow rate. (For this example, we'll use the value of 100.) Middle C will now play the original pitch, while each ascending half step will raise the pitch by 100 cents and each descending half step will lower it by the same amount. Again, you can use this feature to control the decay, nuance, or pan settings instead of the pitch. You might even want to combine them by determining the pitch from the keyboard and decay time from the modulation wheel. How's that for MIDI implementation?

You can do bulk data dumps from the front panel of the R8, selecting between all data, just the sequences, just the setup parameters, or a single pattern's data. With all this MIDI control at the programmer's fingertips and a full set of system exclusive commands, I hope to see computer librarian and editing programs for the R8 released soon.

Conclusions

The R8 is so well-designed that it's difficult to find fault with anything. The manual is a 230-page tome that is, at times, extremely slow going. All the information is there, and I did finally figure just about everything out. But at some time in the future, Roland is just going to have to hire someone who speaks English to write their manuals.

The user interface is complex, but logical. Some functions take several keystrokes to complete, and the use of increment, decrement, page, parameter select, and cursor buttons gets frustrating at times. But then again, the R8 is a very complex and powerful machine. I think that the only easier interface would have required a CRT and a trackball! After only a couple of hours, I was able to make my way through the maze of commands with ease. If I wanted to get really picky, I could complain that there isn't a tap tempo button, or that the increment/decrement and cursor buttons don't scroll when held down, but those are about the only faults I could come up with.

There are plenty of great sounds on this machine, and the ability to read additional sounds from a ROM card means that the R8's sounds will keep up with the times. (Roland, please offer cards with Latin, African, and symphonic percussion samples.)

On top of all this, the price is right. Coming in at \$995.00 suggested retail, this machine will take a long time (if ever) to outgrow. If you're looking for a drum machine with muscle, if you really care about the sound and feel of your songs, and if you want a machine that offers mucho flexibility, this is it.

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Charlie Adams

Charlie Adams combines the finesse of jazz with the emotion of rock 'n' roll. He has quick hands and a light touch, but he can play hard when the time comes. He is animated when he plays, but is totally in control of what he's doing. He may be playing very intricate patterns on his hi-hat, but every stroke is clean and well defined.

This night finds Charlie playing with popular new age artist Yanni. The band consists of three keyboard players—Yanni, new age artist and *Entertainment Tonight* host John Tesh, and Joyce Imbesi—with Charlie on drums and percussion. With everyone in a stationary position around the stage, Charlie gets to be more visually prominent than most drummers. He sits in his "cage," surrounded by acoustic and electronic drums. Electronic pads sit above and behind him, with the acoustics more or less taking the centerpiece position.

Charlie can whirl around to strike his pads without too much stretching from his sitting position, or he can stand behind the kit to play the pads. This can become a bit difficult when he is playing both pads and acoustics at the same time, but Charlie manages to pull it off smoothly. A powerful cascade of crashing cymbals will bring him to his feet in dramatic concession to the emotional conclusion of a piece of music.

Off to the side of the stage sits a bass drum, cymbals, timpani, and a piccolo snare drum. These are used mainly for work with Yanni's acoustic piano pieces.

Charlie is so enthusiastic about his music that it's infectious. "In this band I get to do it all," he says, "all the stuff that I used to take lessons for. I've been very lucky in

that we get a chance to experiment a little bit more than other groups might. In Yanni's and John Tesh's case, I get to be more diversified and use more percussion. This is the first band that I get to use brushes with since my jazz band days."

Adams grew up in Chicago and became a die-hard Buddy Rich fan early on. Rich played Chicago often, and young Charlie saw as many of Rich's shows as he could. In his teens, he began taking lessons with Phil Stanger at Frank's Drum Shop. His musical tastes broadened into rock, and his influences included Ringo, Ginger Baker, Mitch Mitchell, Ian Paice, Carl Palmer, Bill Bruford, and Phil Collins. "But," he says, "despite all those influences, Buddy Rich was always the number-one guy for me.

"Musicians are extreme people, I think," Charlie continues. "I like hanging around with drummers the best, to tell you the truth. I'm not into this competition thing at all. We're not on a football field; this isn't the Super Bowl. I can learn something from other drummers."

Charlie played in the jazz band in school and in rock bands after school. His studies included everything from marching drums to polkas, and from waltzes to Latin—not to mention his first love: big band jazz. After two years in junior college, Charlie entered DePaul University, where he continued his work with Phil Stanger. He also studied with Bob Tilles.

When the disco craze hit Chicago, Charlie immigrated to Minneapolis/St. Paul on the recommendation of a friend. There he met Yanni, and together they formed a

rock band called Chameleon. The band released four albums on their own label and had a large following in the Midwest, which they toured extensively. Charlie comments on that period, "I'm glad that we went through the experience as young as we did, but still kept our Midwestern values. A lot of people who get some level of fame early in their careers have problems with drugs later on. Elvis died from it. Jimi Hendrix died from it. Keith Moon, John Bonham—the list goes on. We don't have that problem in Yanni's band. Nobody is into drugs or any artificial stimuli. It's not as good, anyway. There's nothing like being on stage and hearing the audience; there's nothing like that kind of feeling."

After the breakup of Chameleon, Yanni signed a record deal with Private Music. Chameleon's bass player, Dugan McNeill, also signed a record contract, and Charlie found himself playing with both artists. Dugan flew him back to Minneapolis, where they put together his album at Prince's Paisley Park Studios. Charlie describes Dugan's music as "kind of like U2 meets Genesis.

"I've been going back and forth between the two of them," he says, "but I ended up staying here in Los Angeles. I had ten years of snow. I really like winter out here," he laughs.

Charlie describes his live setup with Yanni. "My acoustic drums are all miked, plus there are triggers inside them. My drums are old Ludwigs, but my snare drum is a 15-year-old Slingerland TDR. I put a 40-strand snare on the bottom of it.

"Down by the timpani, I have a little Sonor *Pancake*, which they don't make anymore. That's the thinnest snare I've ever seen. It's only 2" deep. I've kept a lot of my antiques. I have a 21" Chinese gong that's over 200 years old. It sounds better than any 50" gong I've ever heard. It's splashy. I also use bell trees and wind chimes and some LP congas."

Charlie uses a combination of Zildjian, Paiste, and Sabian cymbals with his set. But when it comes to recording, he might use something different. "A lot of the cymbal crashes on Yanni's *Chameleon Days* album are band cymbal crashes," he says. "They sound so much different. They're so big-sounding.

"I'm using some Roland equipment—the *Octapads* and the *PM-16* and the *S-330* sampler. I've created all my own samples. Everything was taken from the digital studio and transferred to cards. None of my sounds are stock. On stage, I use the E-mu *SP-12*. All my pads are Simmons.

"I like the electronics, although I feel



Charlie Adams, Joyce Imbesi, John Tesh, and Yanni.

like I'm getting to be an M.I.T. graduate. All I do is read manuals now. I've been sampling, and I've got so many pads and four drum machines, and I've learned how to work the Mac computer. It's a lot of brain work. Playing acoustic drums is more emotional. I still don't think you can get the same emotion out of electronic drums as you can get out of an acoustic kit, because they don't have the touch—yet. They have a lot of touch-sensitive stuff now—and I have all that—but playing nice little buzz rolls or articulate stuff like that still doesn't come off on electronic drumpads the way it does on a real snare drum.

"I think music has come full circle again. The public has gotten so used to hearing everything so perfect that music is not as interesting as it used to be. I think we're seeing it go to where now they want to hear the drummer maybe speed up a little bit or slow down a little bit or waiver—because it's human. They want to hear the human interaction.

"When Cream and Jimi Hendrix were out, you knew who each drummer was. Now it's become so standardized with all the technology that sometimes you don't know who's playing. 'Great snare sound, but I've heard it on this album and this album and this album....'

"Buddy Rich once said in an interview that in his day, Krupa and Louie Bellson and all those great drummers had their individual styles. How they played was just as apparent as what kind of sound they brought out. That's the problem that drummers are facing right now. That's why, for instance, on *Chameleon Days* I used all my own acoustic snares. They don't sound like other people's snare drums. We used a couple of different kinds, but they were my own drums.

"I think everybody's finding out that by going back to a lot of acoustic stuff, each drummer's sound becomes much more identifiable. When I hear Neil Peart or Stewart Copeland, I know which drummer it is. When I listen to a pop hit, I can't tell who's playing drums. I'd rather listen to humans now. I'm a little tired of the machines."

Charlie has worked on two of Yanni's three albums. He says that Yanni gives him a lot of room to create his drum and percussion parts. "On the last album, I was

there from the inception. He was very patient with me and taught me how to engineer. While he was playing keyboard parts, I would engineer. So, when it came time to do drum parts, I was so familiar with what was going on with the melody that I would base my rhythms around his melodies. That's what I like about his music: I get to play drums a little bit more melodically because I'm not following a vocalist. I'm following his melodies and his counterpoint and the string rhythms. On certain songs we'll say, 'We don't need a drumbeat on this. Let's do some percussion. Let's do some timpani. Let's do cymbal crashes.' The sound was a combination of electronics and acoustics, but we really went a lot more acoustic on the last album.

"Learning engineering has been very beneficial to me because now I understand the frequencies where you record drums. I know where the gates are set now, where the EQ's are, and what reverbs I'm using. Yanni's been teaching me how to produce drums. Now if I go in the studio, I'm going

to know where to set a gate and where to mike a snare and the height of the mic'."

Yanni's band is very tight on stage, but the special communication between Yanni and Charlie comes from knowing each other so well. "I've pretty much stuck to one or two people my whole career," Charlie says. "Besides the musical part of it, I also like the friendship. Being with your friends makes you happy. Yanni and I know each other so well musically because we played in rock bands together. I know his Greek influences

well, too—like all the 7/8 times. Greek 7/8 is very different from western 7/8.

When we play Greek 7/8, you can dance to it. That's their main time signature, whereas it's 4/4 here.

"It was interesting learning 7/8 from Yanni, because he showed me different ways of doing it so I don't even think it's an odd time anymore. It just comes naturally now. Plus we're doing some 9/8 stuff now. It's the same Greek rhythm, only he added two more beats at the end of the measure."

Charlie says that his first love is playing live. "That's what I'm setting everything up for right now. They really let me do a lot of things on this tour because they had figured, 'We have three keyboard players, and they're going to be very stationary.' They intentionally let me do a lot of the things that I did with the cage and all the pads. There are easier ways of playing that kind of stuff. But I did that on purpose."

Charlie somehow finds time to write music, too. He describes it as "very jazz-oriented time signatures. I have a lot of stuff written. I get to use some of it now with John and Yanni's soundtracks, and that's a great outlet. It has come in handy



for underscoring and film soundtracks because you get a chance to do something a little stranger. Stewart Copeland does such

a great job on the soundtracks and the underscoring he did for *Wall Street*, *Talk Radio*, and *The Equalizer*.

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"See, with Chameleon, we always had input from the other members on arrangements and regarding writing our own parts. So this isn't anything new right now. But in Yanni's and John's cases, I get to be more diversified. I get to use more percussion.

"Everything is 24-hour-a-day drumming for me," Charlie says. "I'm on call all the time. I'm doing John's movie right now. If Yanni gets another movie, I'm going to have to start on that with him. We've already started on the next album with Yanni. And I'm going to have to go into rehearsals with John for *The Pat Sajak Show*."

Charlie has worked on three movie soundtracks with Yanni so far. "We did two movies at the same time, *Heart Of Midnight* and *The Frank Nitti Story*. We were doing 14-hour days for three weeks in a row. But we didn't really notice it. You get into a groove. They were our first movies, too.

"The music that Yanni did for *Frank Nitti* was very melodic, *Godfather*-type stuff. Then we did *Steal The Sky*, which was more like a James Bond movie. I got to do a lot of ethnic percussion in that because it was all Middle Eastern. I got to do all these weird bells and tablas. That was a ball.

"*Heart Of Midnight* is a scary one. I was doing all kinds of percussion stuff, like gong scrapes with backward reverbs. That one was kind of fun. All three movies were different, too. Now we want to get a comedy."

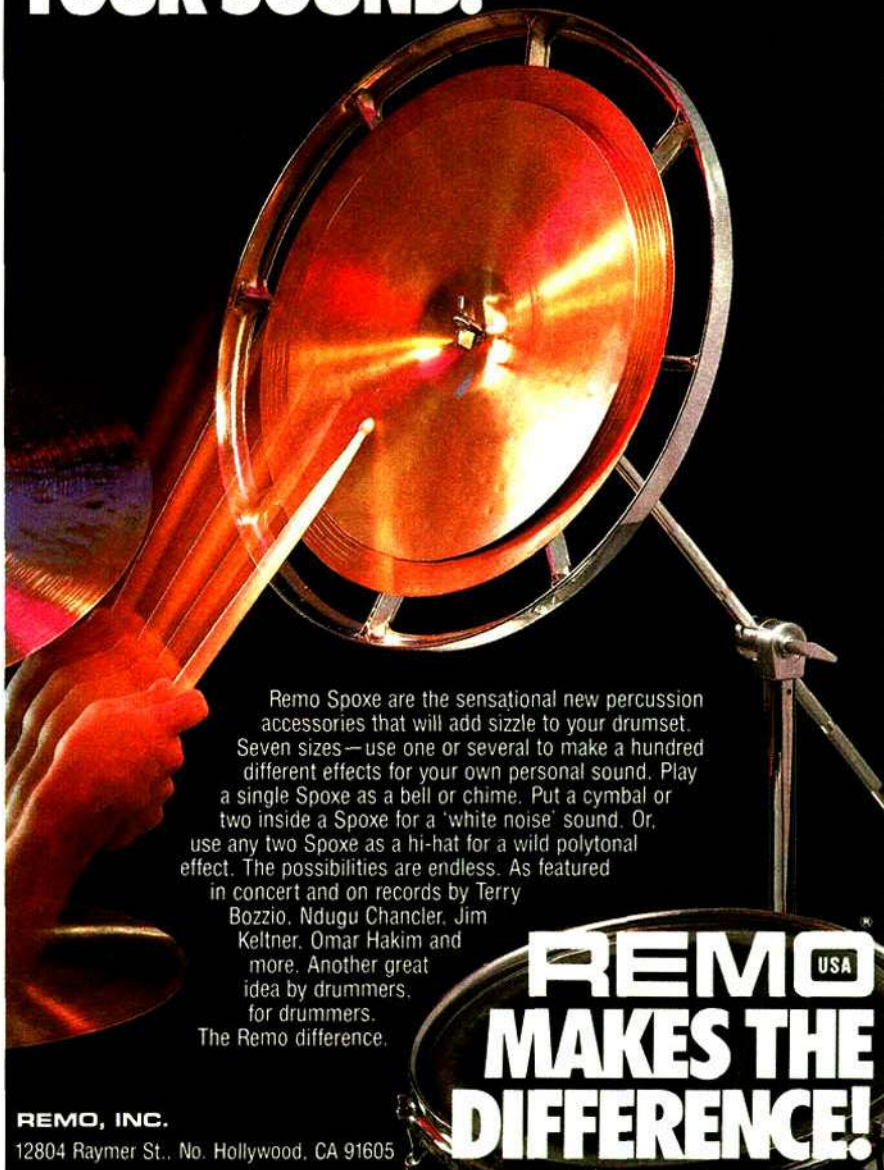
In between all this activity, Charlie also wants to get back into teaching. He used to teach in Chicago and Minneapolis/St. Paul. "It was really good for me," he says. "My reading got better because I was teaching again. It also teaches you patience.

"I want to take some lessons out here in L.A. I want to go back and read big band charts again just because it's different from what I'm doing. I'd like to get some more brush technique, too. I think that would be kind of cool. So, I'm going to look into that."

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Linear Patterns Made Easy

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I don't know how many of you read Gary Chaffee's excellent column on linear drumming in the December '88 issue of *MD*, but if you didn't, you might want to go back and take a look at it. Gary gives a thorough explanation of the subject. As far as the level of difficulty, though, Gary's column jumped right into the deep end. This prompted me to come up with a few exercises that might ease you into the whole idea of linear drumming. Just for review, linear drumming has to do with playing time on the drumset, but doing so by playing a single line of notes broken up between various parts of the set—no two voices sounding at the same time.

This first set of exercises consists of simple linear funk/rock patterns that are fun to play and, more importantly, sound more difficult than they actually are. You'll notice that no voice, be it bass drum, hi-hat, or snare drum, plays more than one 16th note at a time. Your right hand plays all of the hi-hat notes and your left hand plays all of the snare drum notes. Start out slowly, and play the accented backbeats loud. All of the other snare drum notes should be ghosted (barely heard). One other piece of advice about these patterns: Concentrate on playing the bass drum part and the

snare drum backbeats. All of the other notes just fit in between.

The next examples are slightly more difficult in that the right hand on the hi-hat occasionally plays two 16th notes in a row.

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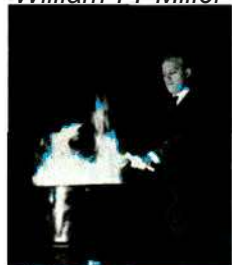
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Again, start out slowly, and lay into the backbeat.

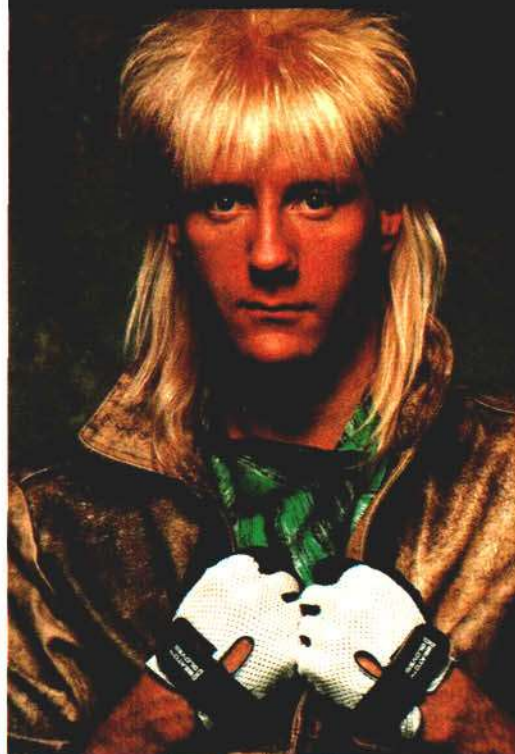
For a good independence exercise, play all of these patterns with your right hand on the snare drum and your left hand on the hi-hat. If you want to make these even more challenging, play some of the unaccented snare drum notes on your toms. Also, try playing some of the hi-hat notes on the bell of your ride cymbal. With a little imagination, these patterns can really start sounding complex!



Gregg Bissonette

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21 Productive Ideas For The Private Teacher

The following ideas are offered as suggestions to help make you a more effective teacher. By employing these ideas, you can maximize the benefits that your students receive from each lesson with you.

- 1. Plan Ahead:** Have an overall plan as to how you're going to move the student along. It doesn't have to be set in concrete, but it does help you avoid wandering aimlessly from week to week.
- 2. Establish Groundrules:** You need to establish a basic understanding between you and the student early in the game. Basic groundrules can include regular practice requirements, fees, payment methods, attitude, etc. It's a good idea to type your groundrules and give a copy to every new student at the first lesson.
- 3. Teach Practice Skills:** Practice skills are very similar to study skills. Once you have them, everything comes easier. A regular practice schedule needs to be set up with each student. Explain that you won't be around to enforce it, and it's his/her responsibility to carry it out. Parents can be helpful in keeping the student honest. Good practice skills, when learned and used, can make all the difference in the world.
- 4. Keep Your Studio Clean And Up-To-Date:** A clean environment promotes better learning. It also helps your students feel as though they're in an organized, important place, and this is vital. Have enough of all the proper equipment and teaching aids readily available. It goes without saying that all studio equipment should always be properly maintained. It's an investment that can pay for itself many times over.
- 5. Don't Miss Lessons:** If for some unavoidable reason you have to miss a lesson, give the student advance notice. (You obviously have the right to expect the same courtesy from your students.) Set up an alternate lesson date immediately.
- 6. Teach All Styles:** It's important for today's drummer to be able to play in a variety of styles. Your students don't have to be masters of every style, but they should be able to hold their own in as many musical situations as possible.
- 7. Reinforce:** Don't forget old material. Students have a tendency to forget the basics when they're not reinforced regularly. Don't allow that to happen. Regular reinforcement will keep both you and your students on your toes.
- 8. Tailor Exercises To Individual Interests:** Although it's extremely important to teach a variety of styles, many students will lose interest if what they're learning is not applied to their current musical interests. Whenever possible, try to use examples from familiar music to demonstrate an important point.
- 9. Teach With Conviction:** It's important to believe in what you're teaching. If you only have a half-hearted belief in what you're doing, it will come across as half-hearted to your students.
- 10. Point Out Improvements:** We all have a natural tendency to stress areas that need improvement, ignoring the improvement itself. You may be the only gauge your students have on their progress. A steady stream of "this needs work" can be disheartening. Of course, this doesn't mean praising when performance isn't worthy of it. Approval used sparingly is more effective than constant praise.
- 11. Don't Fake It:** If you don't know the answer to a question, admit it. Feeding a student false information to save face is never a good idea. Once you've admitted you don't know, do your best to find the answer. If you find you're constantly being asked questions you can't answer, take it as a hint. You either need to do more homework on the subject, or refer the student to another teacher.
- 12. Use Surprise:** Ask for something unexpected periodically. This not only keeps your students' attention up, but helps to combat monotony. Having a routine is good, but going through the same material in the exact same manner week after week can get boring—and who wants to go to a boring lesson?
- 13. Communicate With Parents:** This is particularly important if the parents are paying for the lessons. It's also common courtesy to keep them abreast of a student's progress. You can also use them to help enforce the practice schedule you've set up with the student.
- 14. Promote Competition:** Try to get students involved in competitive situations—things such as all-state tryouts or local band auditions. This is not to suggest entering students into competitions they're not ready for. Defeat doesn't always build character. But a well-timed competition can help keep a student motivated.

15. Promote Playing: Get your students into some type of musical situation *outside* of lessons whenever you feel they're ready. Remember, we are trying to create musicians. It's vital for every developing musician to interact with others. There is no substitute for real musical experience.

16. Help Students With Equipment Selections: As a teacher, you'll be expected to know more about the instrument than just how to play and teach it. Students will usually expect you to guide them in their choice of new or additional equipment.

17. Be Aware Of Differences In Abilities And Goals: Not all students have equal abilities or equal expectations. This doesn't mean you shouldn't push a student to his/her full potential. But realize that not every student wants to be a professional. Some may be pursuing drumming for totally different reasons, and it's counterproductive to scare them away with obscure techniques. Also, everyone learns at a different pace. Some students will always be behind the point where you'd like them to be. If a student is not progressing at a satisfactory pace, try to determine the reason. If you can help, by all means do so. If not, accept the fact that things may not always go exactly as planned.

18. Be Willing To Bend: Keep in mind that every student is different, and different students may require different teaching approaches. You should be willing to change your approach if you want to be effective. The only alternative is to accept only a certain type of student—a choice most of us simply cannot afford to make.

19. Have Reasons: Be able to explain *why* you want certain things done in certain ways. Students often can't see the total picture, or the reasoning behind it. "Because I said so" is not an acceptable answer.

20. Be Patient: This is the golden rule. A highly pressured student won't work as efficiently as one who is comfortable with you. A relaxed student is always more receptive to learning than one who is uptight as the result of an impatient teacher.

21. Stay In Fifth Gear: Teaching requires considerable energy. Be prepared to give 110% for the entire lesson—every lesson. This includes going into the lesson in a good mood, with a clear head, and with a positive attitude. Always keep in mind that you just might be helping to mold the talents of the world's next great drummer!

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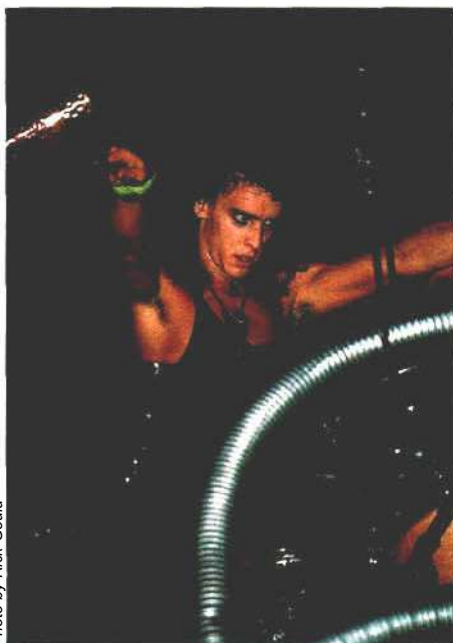
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Photo by Rick Gould



happen any other way but our way. But we're easy to work with, too, in that we're not closed to ideas or suggestions. We just have a clear vision of what we want to sound like.

TS: It's great that you don't allow the producer to intrude on your creative vision. But can you recall a time of having strayed from that path due to outside influences: record label, management, etc?

SR: We've always done exactly what we've

wanted to do without any objections from anybody. We've been lucky because that hasn't been a struggle.

TS: Do you think any of the stuff you're playing is lost on your audience?

SR: That's a weird question for me to answer. [laughs] Sometimes I think the whole band is a little out there for some people. Whether we're ahead of our time—I'm not sure about that. There are really popular bands who are just that—Pink Floyd, for instance.

TS: There's more to your music than a good song and a great singer.

SR: There's something a lot deeper to this, definitely. We've never been the sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll type of band. *Operation: Mindcrime* is about a concept that could happen these days. I think it just takes a while for some people to sit down and understand the whole story, because they have to delve into some reading to reach it, instead of just listening and enjoying the music—which is perfectly fine too, if that's all they want.

But *Operation: Mindcrime* took nine months to put together because it's hard to do a concept record. You've got to have a certain order, you've got to have characters, and all the characters need to have a background. It's almost like a screenplay or a book rather than an album. So there was a lot of thought put into all aspects of it, which may go over people's heads sometimes. That may be why we haven't been so commercially accepted, because it takes

a while to get the whole picture. But I think that's changing because some of our songs are getting a lot more airplay—as well as our videos. But it's still not the kind of stuff that you can just slap on and everyone's going to understand it right off the bat.

TS: The band's music has a very cohesive quality not often heard in the more traditional heavy metal format. There's not the traditional guitar solo, keyboard solo, etc. When there is an instrumental break—which occurs quite often—the band often takes the break as a unit.

SR: Well, there are a lot of bands today with great musicians, but maybe because they haven't been together long enough to understand each other musically, they tend to riff separately. It can sound like everybody's soloing. We started out doing that in our younger days: everybody trying to outshine one another, or trying to fill up every single space in a song. But we've learned over the years that less can be best, less can be more. In terms of recording, the size of the snare drum sound for instance—if you don't play it a lot, it sounds bigger than if you do play it a lot. Leaving air in the songs so that they can breathe helps to create better dynamics. That's something we've learned over the years.

TS: That attitude is displayed on your double bass drum technique. You tend to use both bass drums only in spots.

SR: Exactly. I'm not into playing double kicks all of the time. There is a time and a place in our music where it sounds good, and there are times where it doesn't. I just use it as an extra limb, to add something different to a song.

TS: You also mentioned dynamics. Another difference between your band and the rest of the pack is the gradations between soft and loud, delicate and heavy, darkness and light in your sound. And when it comes to your playing, I've seen you come down on your drums with high lift on your sticks and with a ferocious aggression. Alternately, you also lean to playing less intensely when it calls for it. It's definitely not the standard metal—the bashing away in 4/4 type of thing.

SR: That, again, is something that we all prefer. Of course, we are a metal band, and people usually like to hear the in-your-face sound; that's what metal is all about. But for us, there's a time and place to be loud, and there's a time for things to be a little more moody. For example, instead of the usual snare sound, I might go to a side stick or something, which a lot of drummers in metal don't do; usually a lot of the drumming is very straightforward. In most cases, the things you hear on the first song are pretty much what you hear on the whole album. We're not that type of band. We prefer to use dynamics and different sound embellishments to create different moods and atmospheres.

TS: Speaking of your snare sound, through the effects you use, you obtain all different types of sounds. Since you don't trigger sampled sounds, do you use any special

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play the
snare drum
a lot,
it sounds
bigger
than if you
do play it
a lot."**

tuning?

SR: There's really nothing special to it, except that I have my snare drum tuned really tight. As far as the different sounds, every song is a separate song from the one before it—even in a concept album—and each has a different mood and a different message. So why make every sound the same? We try to use a sound that either creates or reflects an individual's mood for that song. That's what I like about Stewart Copeland: He was great in perfecting his sounds in that he'd tune his snare to a certain pitch—like a high A—that would be in tune with the song. For the next album, we're going to experiment further with that, too.

TS: You seem to have playing ability on both your right and left sides. You must be ambidextrous.

SR: I think all drummers are ambidextrous. Don't they have to be? [laughs] If being ambidextrous means that I can tell my left foot to do what my right hand does, then I guess I am. People have told me that I am.

TS: Do you lead with either hand?

SR: Yes, I do. I can't play as well left-handed as I can right-handed, but I can get away with it. I've done it before in situations where I've broken one of my bass drums and I've had to play all my right foot patterns with my left foot. I've never really switched everything to my left side—playing a mirror image of what I do on my right side. But one thing I try to do when I practice is to work both sides, playing the same things. If you can't play with your weak hand what your lead hand can play, it can be a hindrance. But if you can do both it opens more doors. I've tried to work on that.

TS: You have a tendency to utilize your China cymbal in the capacity of a ride.

SR: I like it as a rhythm; it's really disturbing sounding. I also like the textures that it gives a rhythm, and it's a visual thing, too.

TS: That's something that's worked well for you on different levels. But just because you come up with a different way of doing something, it doesn't guarantee that it's going to go over well. How do you know

where to draw the line?

SR: I don't do things just to be different, but I do try out ideas to keep things interesting for me. We've done about 200 shows on this tour so far, and since we've started we've changed maybe two songs in the whole set. So you find ways of changing things around to keep it as interesting as possible.

But as far as doing things just for the sake of being different, that's not where I'm at. I guess working out our ideas to see if they fit just comes down to the time when we first actually write the music. We have multi-track recording units in the basement, so we'll write, record, and just play it back. We might listen to the tapes for a couple of

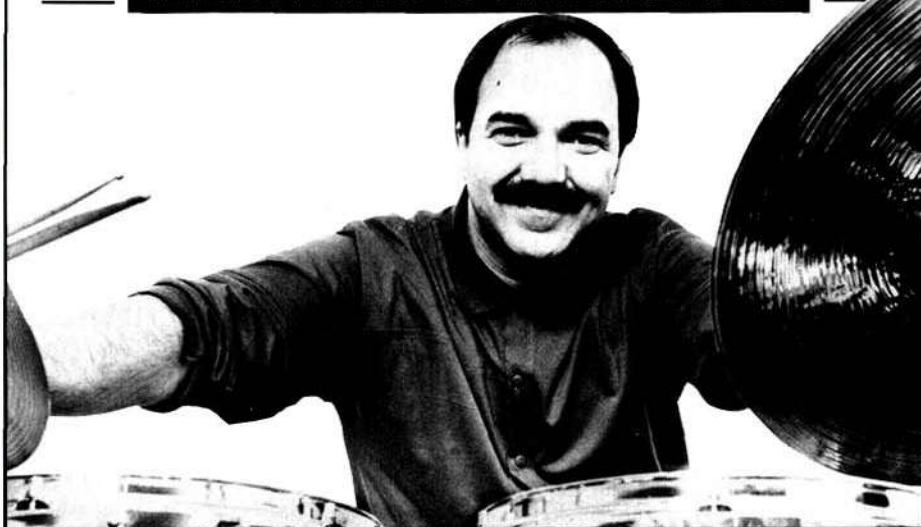
weeks, and then brainstorm—tearing our own playing apart for what does and doesn't sound good.

TS: You've mentioned working with machines several times. Did you always favor computers and electronics, or did that come gradually?

SR: It was a gradual change, and now everything we use is computerized. As far as me personally, I really do use the drum machines I have on the road quite a bit. Some people find that weird because they say that a drummer like me wouldn't normally like drum machines—whatever that means! I love drum machines; I think they're great. They're always right on time; that's what's cool about them. [laughs] Plus for

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me, the drum machine is a great writing tool; I just wheel my studio into my hotel room and write. It doesn't make any noise, I don't get any complaints from anybody. In fact, for the last record, all the demos we did were from programs I put down on the drum machine. So I wrote all the drum parts first, then I put them on the machine for the demos.

TS: You used electronic drums on the *Rage For Order* tour, but now you've come back to acoustic drums. How come?

SR: I chose to use electronics on the tour because *Rage* was such an electronic album. We used a lot of keyboards, we utilized a lot of the technology available to us, plus the concept of the album was about technology itself. Going on the road with my electronic kit was just an expansion of that. Then halfway through the tour, I switched back to acoustics anyway, because things kept on blowing up on me, and it was beginning to piss me off.

TS: Jumping back to *Operation: Mindcrime*, since you enjoy programming so much, why didn't you just program all your drum tracks for the final product as you did on the demos rather than playing your tracks on a conventional kit?

SR: I wanted to program on this record; in pre-production I programmed everything on a Fairlight—the way Def Leppard programs drum tracks. But the producer said, "You can play it just as well as you can program it in, so you should really play it." Since I can program drum tracks any time I want to anyway, I agreed with him.

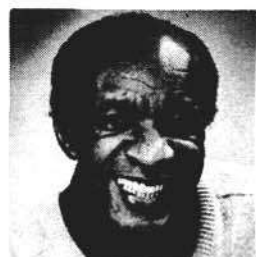
TS: With each successive album, your drumming has matured. Would you attribute that change to touring so much and working with the same group of people for the last eight years, or was it more of a conscious effort on your behalf?

SR: Over the years it seems to have gotten better. Obviously, you're supposed to improve with time. [laughs] And hopefully, it will get even better. We all practice a lot of the time, too, and I guess that for me, it really comes down to a matter of just that—practicing. Through practicing and the benefit of playing live so often, I've tried to improve my playing each day.

When we're touring, the practice is confined to soundchecks and, obviously, playing the gig every night. There's not a lot of time to physically sit down and practice during the day because my kit isn't set up until soundcheck. But I do keep my drum machine with me all of the time, and I have the keyboards close by so that I can write songs any time I get the urge. It's not physical drumming, but I can keep my mind working in a creative direction and I can get my ideas down on tape.

But looking over the albums since we started, I'd like to think it's come a long way. It was a lot of hard work though, and I really strived to improve my playing. I guess I was lucky in that I always had a good sense of rhythm—that's a definite plus—although I still can't dance. [laughs]





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by Joe Morello
Transcribed by Keith Necessary

Endurance And Control: Part 1

MUSIC KEY



The purpose of these exercises is to help develop control of single strokes while moving between two different odd-note groupings.

First, practice each separate subdivision slowly with the metronome, accenting the first note of each grouping. As your proficiency increases, eliminate the accents. Start at around quarter note = 53 on your metronome. Playing these exercises smoothly and evenly is *more* important than playing them fast.

Once you're comfortable with all of them, repeat the second bar of each one twice. You can then repeat the second bar three, four, or up to as many as 30 repetitions. This is great for your endurance. You could also try this with your feet, using two bass drums or a double pedal.

It's important that these exercises be practiced with a metronome. Stay relaxed and keep the sticks in constant motion. If you feel any tension, don't be afraid to slow the tempo down.

These exercises can be applied easily to the drumset. First, play exercises 1 through 4 over four quarter notes on the bass drum, with two and four on the hi-hat. Here's an example:

Here are a few suggestions for variations on these exercises:

1. Play at all volume levels. Try everything from extremely soft (*ppp*) to extremely loud (*fff*). Stay relaxed.
2. Play all the exercises with brushes. It's a great exercise, and you will improve control with the sticks.
3. Practice exercises 1 through 4 starting with the left hand.

Any further questions on this series of articles may be directed to Joe Morello c/o Modern Drummer magazine.



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Reflections Of A New

Will Lee, my dear friend and all-time favorite bass player, once told me that one of my greatest talents as a record producer is my ability to surround myself with talented people. I love to work with creative people, and I like being friends with people I respect.

One of the advantages of my job is that I get "behind the scenes" looks at some of the world's greatest drummers. It's given me a chance to discover some of the abilities they possess that many people may be unaware of. What follows are some reflections on three of these drummers. Hopefully, you'll see what I've seen—some of the aspects of their talent that places them among the most gifted players on earth.

STEVE GADD

For as long as I've been producing records in New York, Steve Gadd has been the one drummer most emulated by the up-and-coming, and most respected by the established. Steve introduced me to funk and laid open a new world for me. Yet I never really appreciated the full depth of his talents until I worked with him on a record date.

By 1979, I had managed to land a freelance producer gig at RCA Records, and was given the assignment of "sweetening" existing tracks for an RCA release. I listened and realized that the original drummer had some time problems, and as a result none of the other instruments were locked into any kind of groove. I wanted to make a good impression on the "powers that were" at RCA, and I wanted to do a good job on one of my first projects. So I called Steve to overdub new drums.

When he arrived on the date, I had everything ready for him...or so I thought. After tuning the drums and getting his sounds up in only 15 minutes (I've seen it take hours with others), Steve asked to see a chart of the tune. I felt sick! I was still relatively inexperienced at producing and had neglected to write a drum chart. All the RCA big shots were looking on, and I thought to myself, "I'm a goner."

It would have taken a couple of hours to write out all the tricky rhythms in that extended dance chart, and that would have thrown the project behind schedule. I walked over to Gadd and whispered, "Steve, I'm in hot water. I forgot the chart. Can you help me out?" I had no idea what to do. Steve said, "No problem, roll the tape." And with pen and manuscript paper in hand, he wrote a chart as he listened! I couldn't believe my eyes. Then he sat down behind the drums and nailed it in one take. He hadn't missed a single note! His play-

ing locked all the other tracks into the groove. I looked like a genius to the RCA execs, but the genius was Steve Gadd.

JOE BONADIO

Will Lee put it best: "Joe Bonadio is a monster." That seems to be what everyone in New York is saying these days. Joe is about as rock solid a drummer as they make 'em. And he's a world-class percussionist, to boot. In fact, it was the extraordinary Brazilian percussionist Nana Vasconcelos who first urged Bonadio to move to New York from Kenosha, Wisconsin. But I really don't think that Joe's success is due solely to his considerable musical talents. I think that what has put Bonadio over the top is his warm personality.

I could tell you stories of his technical prowess, his metronomic time, his superb musical sense.... Joe Bonadio is one of the finest musicians on the contemporary scene. His work with Chuck Mangione, Bob Moses and Pat Metheny, and The SOS All-Stars proves it. But his talent is not what made him my first-call drummer and percussionist. His heart is what put him at the top of my list. Joe makes everyone feel like family. More often than not, you'll hear people say, "Joe Bonadio is my friend." And if you think that doesn't make a difference, think again!

For as long as I've known him, Bonadio has been right there when I needed him. He really goes out of his way to be accommodating. As far as I'm concerned, that means as much as his ability to play whatever's needed. During one of my all-night record dates last year, I called Bonadio's home to see if he was available to come over to Acme to do some percussion overdubs. It was late and Joe was trying to get some sleep before heading out to the airport where he and the rest of the Mangione group were to catch an early flight to the West Coast. Joe knew that tour would keep him on the road for over a month, and there would be no other time he could lay down these parts. So he got out of bed and drove over to the studio. I felt terrible asking him to do it. But Joe wouldn't have it any other way.

It was after midnight when he arrived and began laying down the percussion parts. It was absolutely incredible watching him turn a simple tambourine part into a work of art. Joe had a tambourine in each hand and jingles strapped to each wrist. Nothing is inconsequential to Bonadio. If he's doing it, it's important! And all during the session, Joe was breaking into his standup comedy routines, yelling, "I told you guys I'm a fusion player. Ain't you got

no 9/8 for me?" He turned a potentially weird situation into a party! When the session was finished, he drove directly to the airport to catch his flight. I don't know many people who would have done that.

DAVE WECKL

I first met Dave Weckl in 1983, after starting my own record label, SOS. We became good friends quickly, and Dave played on virtually all of the early SOS releases. It was obvious to me (and just about everyone else in New York) that Weckl was one of the special ones! He is to drums what Michael Brecker is to saxophone, what Chick Corea is to piano, what Anthony Jackson is to bass: Weckl is brilliant. I've got lots of great Weckl stories, but these two best exemplify his character and awesome talent.

In January 1985, having taken on the responsibility of managing The Bill Connors Group, I was securing bookings for the band. We all felt that the group's "official debut" should be held at The Bottom Line in New York, so I called the owner to make arrangements. The elite of New York's music society packed the house for the opening night's sets. Weckl kicked things off with a short drum solo to the cheers of the audience. We had a great time, and everyone loved the band. We felt good that first night, but we had no way of knowing what the next night held in store.

Early the following evening, I picked up Weckl at his house and we drove to New York City. Dave was hungry and wanted to stop somewhere for dinner. But we were already late, so we headed straight to The Bottom Line. Within minutes after we arrived, the house lights dimmed. Weckl turned to me and said, "Joe, the minute this set is over let's get something to eat. I'm starving!" Then he turned around, jumped onto the stage and once again kicked things off with a solo! I will never cease to be amazed by Weckl's cool and nonchalant attitude. The first show concluded to a standing ovation, and Weckl, not so much unimpressed by the cheers as not allowing the cheers to affect him, wandered over to me and we split to find a restaurant. We returned at midnight, just in time for the final set.

I stood in my usual place at the backstage entrance, which afforded me a clear view of the stage and the house. Halfway through the set, I glanced out into the audience and saw Chick Corea and Gayle Moran sitting not far from me. Corea was there to check out Weckl. Dave had spotted him from his seat behind his drumset and was putting on the performance of his life. At

by Joe Ferry

York Producer

one point during his solo, half of Weckl's drumkit actually fell over. (He used to keep a floor tom mounted on a stand that also held a couple of cymbals. When this toppled it took the other floor tom with it.) Weckl played the snare as I scrambled on stage to set the gear back upright. Then, the second it was all back in place, he went to the full set—with me still tightening clamps and bolts. I actually felt a breeze as his sticks whizzed inches past my ear. Needless to say, the place went wild!

After the show, Chick and Gayle came backstage to introduce themselves. Dave and Chick went off into a corner of the crowded dressing room and talked. On the way home that night, Dave said that Chick was thinking of putting together a group he was going to call The Elektrik Band. I think Dave only half believed Chick would ever call. But two weeks later the phone rang. The next thing we knew, I was driving Weckl to the airport to catch a flight to L.A. and his first Elektrik Band tour.

The second story takes place three and a half years later, in the spring of '88 at Acme

Recording. We were recording a particularly difficult piece of music that Dave had never seen before. It was full of very demanding rhythms and figures and, of course, Weckl had it covered after one read-through. Also, he was playing his full rig of electronic and acoustic drums and percussion simultaneously.

We went for a final "take," and about halfway through the piece the other players on the date, all extremely talented people, began to lose their place. I was about to stop the tape, but when I looked over at Weckl it was clear to me that he had no intention of stopping. He actually played the last couple of minutes of that composition alone, making all the rhythmic figures and fills perfectly, swinging as if he had the whole band with him.

As guitarist Al Orlo said recently, "Weckl left the whole rhythm section in the dust. He displaced a 16th note, and nobody knew where Weckl was except Weckl!" We went back and overdubbed everyone else, and even with Dave counting the measures and beats, nobody knew where the hell Weckl

was! When he finally got his idea across and everyone finished the overdubs, we sat down and listened to the playback. As the final notes faded, we all looked at each other, speechless and dazzled by the masterful technique of Dave Weckl. In all my years of producing and listening to music, I have never witnessed anything like that.



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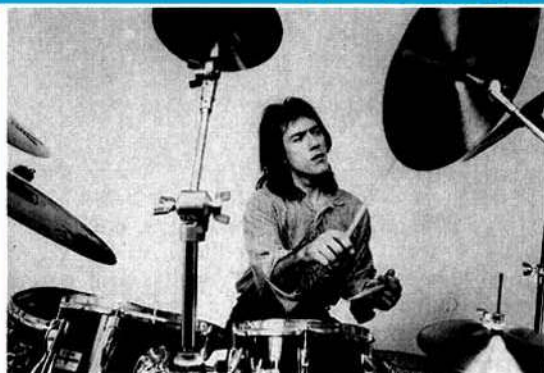
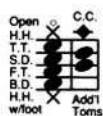


Photo by Jaeger Katos

Vinnie Colaiuta: "Dong Work For Yuda"

MUSIC KEY



This month's *Rock Charts* goes back a few years to look at Vinnie Colaiuta's playing on the Frank Zappa tune "Dong Work For Yuda." This track, from the *Joe's Garage* collection (currently available as *Joe's Garage: The Complete Version*, Barking Pumpkin/Capitol SWCL-74206), is a medium-slow rock tune that Vinnie takes some liberties with. At certain points in the tune Vinnie plays with a lot of finesse, and during other sections, he wails away on the kit.

♩ = 76



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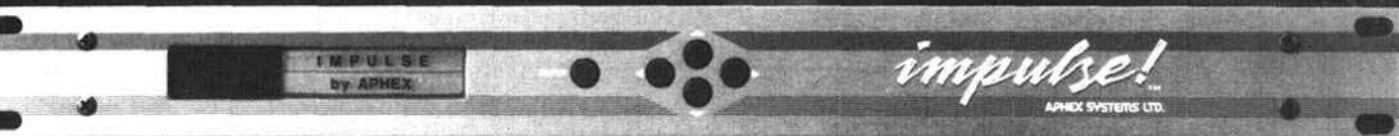
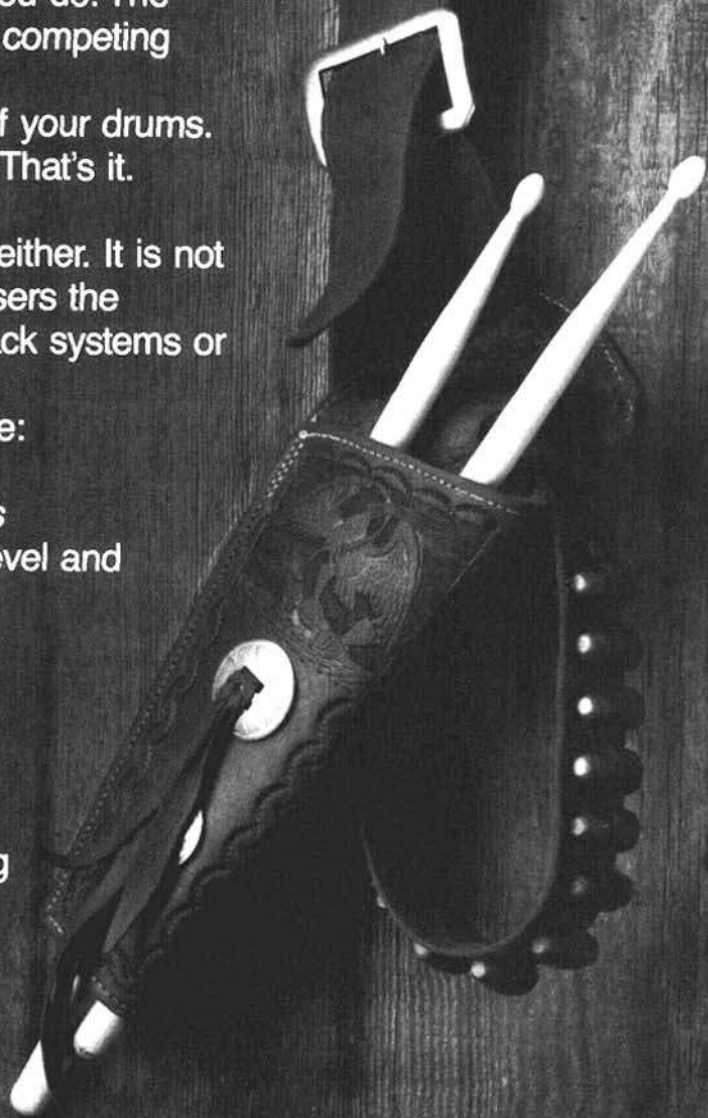
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by Anthony J. Cirone

Portraits In Rhythm: Etude #19

A study of musical form is presented in Etude #19, providing us with a sampling of the book's second section. The Introduction begins with the opening *Largo*, leading to section A's first theme, the *Vivace*. An introduction should do exactly what it suggests—introduce the main body of the work. In this case, it is done in dramatic fashion by using inverted accents. A smooth transition into the *Vivace* is also created with a simple rhythm modulation. In the third line, the 16th- and 32nd-note rhythms of the Introduction become the 8th and 16th notes of the new tempo.

The body of the work contains an A theme (*Vivace*) and a B theme; the B theme begins after the repeat. There is a similar rhythm modulation in the last two lines, as the transition is made from the B section to a restatement of the Introduction. Analyzing musical form, an important element of every composition, helps to understand the

composer's intentions, and also aids in memorization.

Observations

1. "Inverted accents" (in the opening) help emphasize and exaggerate the Introduction's character. Notice the normal accents in the second line; less energy is needed here. Be sure to focus on the transition being made into the *Vivace*.

2. In the book, the first measure of lines two and three (third beat) had an incorrect rhythm. Those measures have been corrected in this article.

3. In lines six, seven, and eight, accents are placed on the ends of the short rolls. In the book, there was a mistake on line seven, measure two, in which the final accent in the series of 8th-note rolls was reversed and placed on the roll. That has been corrected in this article.

4. "Augmentation," a compositional de-

vice repeating a theme or phrase twice as slow, is used in measure four, line seven.

Interpretations

1. Important notes within the Introduction are clearly indicated by the opening accents. To effectively execute these accents, be sure the note following the roll (the release of the roll) is not articulated with an accent.

2. The transition from the opening *Largo* into the *Vivace* is written as a simple double-time process; that is, the speed of the 16th and 32nd notes in the *Largo* is exactly the same as the 8th and 16th notes in the *Vivace*. However, given a performer's creative liberties, I execute this transition using a slight tempo increase at the *Vivace*. The new section (A theme) is thus set apart from the transition, and the beginning of the theme is more readily heard. Performers should be sensitive to what listeners are hearing and adjust the music accordingly. Performances vary because of the performer's interpretations.

3. Exaggerate the end of the *crescendo* in line five, immediately before the repeat. Therefore, as the first theme is repeated, the *subito piano* dynamic will be emphasized.

4. Notice the dotted quarter-note roll in line five, measure three, and that it is followed by a drag. Release this roll early in order to prepare for the drag.

5. Observe the G.P. in line eight. This is an abbreviation for Grand Pause; actually, it is a measure of silence. It's incorrect to treat it as a fermata or hold. Simply count the correct number of beats rest. Beethoven cleverly used this as a device at the end of movements so players would not move until the piece was over!

Edited by Josie Cirone.

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Largo ♩ = 72

ff

dim. - - - - - *p*

cresc. - - -

f

G. P. *p* G. P. *pp*

cresc. - - - - - *f*

♩ = ♩ Largo

cresc. - - - - - *ff*

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"There are times you really play aggressively, and they don't want that, but then if you lay back, they want it aggressive."

We were led by Vic Schoen. They liked the band so much that they brought Les Brown in with his band, and we did a thing that was like the Battle of the Bands. Vic wrote this special piece for two full orchestras with two rhythm sections. It was so well-received that Vic wrote some more things, and we did an album with one rhythm section that was a combination of players, and that was wild.

RF: Do you remember being in the studio for the first time and what that felt like?

SG: Yeah, I think it was with Don Costa at Columbia, on 30th Street. I played drums, and unbeknownst to me, he wrote a bell part, too, which I had to play. I didn't have any mallets with me because they hadn't told me about that, so I just turned the drumsticks around and tried to get a sound like that—dainty.

RF: Were you nervous that it was your first time in the studio?

SC: In a way, I guess. But I went in and did what I had to.

RF: Isn't the process different than live,

though?

SG: It's a totally different way of playing. I play to what's around me, and I never used to wear headphones. I don't know why anybody wears them, because I like to hear the thing live. There's a lot of separation, but the rhythm section is always together. Somebody told me after I came to California that in the studio, you don't play with any dynamics. You play the same level all the time, with brushes or sticks or whatever. And I said, "I don't find that easy to do. There are shadings." And they said, "Well, they'll do it inside the booth." In New York, the engineers would respect your approach to playing. Today you're in a separate room or a booth, and you're miked every way possible. Then, it was a natural way to play. When it got soft, you played soft. When it got loud, you played loud. It used to break me up because people would say, "When it gets softer, don't you slow down a little, and when you get louder, don't you pick up the tempo?" I said, "No." **RF:** Were you actually using your drums in

the studios?

SG: Oh yes. They had a lot of things there, like percussion equipment and bass drums, but I always brought my own drums. I have always tuned my drums so they would be musical. Each drum had tonality. As a matter of fact, one of the things I'm very proud of is the fact that when I was doing a television show or a record, people used to come up to me and

say, "I know you did that because I know your sound."

RF: How did you tune your drums?

SG: At the time, you didn't muffle everything up like they do today. That's like playing on Frisbees. I'm glad I was in a profession where I'd walk in and see anywhere from three people to 100 people playing live, not programming. At one point in my life, I thought about having an AC implant. I honestly do not like what is going on, and I've felt this way since the inception of electronics.

RF: Has it eaten into your work?

SG: Of course. It's eaten into everybody's work. It used to be a live performance. I got a call from Elliot Lawrence for a Lincoln Mercury commercial when I was in New York around 1955. I got to the studio at 76th and First Avenue, and Elliot came over and said, "Wait 'til you see what we're doing today. You're not going to believe this." They were shooting the commercial on the stage, and we were set up back in the foyer. We ran the music down, and then it was, "Let's take one." We did our part while they did their thing up there, and they played it back immediately. It was the first videotaped commercial, the advent of video tape. We could see where it was going to lead. No more live shows. From that moment on, they got control of this and control of that. Now I watch guys come in with their programmable drums, which I don't think have any soul or feeling to them; it's just mechanical. I think somehow it's going to come back around again. It's never going to duplicate a live orchestra. The percussion players are all coming in with racks. Harvey Mason was playing drums on a television series about two years ago, and Larry Bunker and I were playing percussion. Harvey had his drums set up with the railing around them, and I went over and said, "That's nice Harvey, but you look like you're in a handicapped toilet." He cracked up. It's kind of weird when you're working with a 70- to 100-piece orchestra and you're sitting in a little portable booth.

RF: Can you give us a taste of what it was like recording in those days vs. now?

SG: If they had two mic's on a drummer it was a lot. Then they started experimenting with these lavalier mic's that you hang around your neck, which got a much better sound. You just went wherever you had to; it was wireless. They first started using that when I was doing a radio show with Ernie Kovaks. It got a much better sound, except you couldn't breathe or cough or

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grumble—and I used to mumble a lot. Today when I go into a studio, there's an average of eight to twelve microphones.

RF: Does that change the way you play at all?

SG: I still use the same approach. A lot of engineers used to love when I'd come in because I don't sit there and clomp. I don't think I've ever broken a head. Joe Porcaro came up to me on a session we were doing a few months ago, looked at my drums, and said, "Those are the same heads you had ten years ago." The only times my heads have ever broken have been when I'm doing a show and one of the rock 'n' rollers comes in and has to use my drums.

I believe in playing in context with what's around you, and—like my good friend Allan Schwartzberg mentioned in his interview for this magazine—with humor. I've always had a little humor. It's something that you do that some people would interpret as funny—little inuendos. They're not unmusical, but it's just a different approach to things. I got called to do a session for a commercial where I was playing a dinner plate. That's all they wanted me to bring, a dinner plate and a brush. So I brought a couple of different kinds—porcelain, plastic.

RF: When you started in the studios, there weren't click tracks, were there?

SG: No. When we did commercials and we were like a half a second over, we'd have to do another take. That's good training.

RF: When you started using one, did that feel too regimented?

SG: No, I just felt they didn't trust us anymore. [laughs] We were doing a picture a long time ago with Marion Evans. We did a couple of takes with the click, and then we decided we'd try one without the click. The time was exactly the same.

RF: You once said that you have to do a lot of sessions in order to get one that you really enjoy. What are the variables that make you either enjoy or not enjoy a session?

SG: It's the music. What you're asking about is gratification. The sessions are all important—don't get me wrong—and I treat every date that I do with the same intensity, but it's like reading a book you enjoy or reading a book that's drudgery.

RF: What about working with different producers and engineers?

SG: I remember doing something with Bernadette Peters once that was like music from the '40s or '50s. I have five or six sets of drums for different occasions. I wasn't told to bring anything in particular, but I knew what it was going to be, so I brought a regular band set. I came in, and the producer saw a front head on the bass drum. He kept me going with the bass drum forever: "No, that's not the right sound." They were striving to get a rock sound, and I said, "I can get the sound on this drum or I'll call my company and have another bass drum sent out. It's not a rock date, but if this is the sound you want, I'll give it to

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you." So I padded the drum and loosened the head up to where it was like a paper bag, and he said, "Yeah, that's it, perfect." Meanwhile, my other bass drum came in and I said, "Do you want to listen to this one just in case?" And he said, "No, it's perfect." For that kind of music, you don't want a rock sound. Even the conductor/arranger said it wasn't the right sound. I never worked for that producer again because he thought I was giving him a hard time.

It came to the point where if I got called to do something, I was ready to have two sets brought down. If you don't like this one, try the other one. I could alter the drums, but my feeling during that time was that the engineers were looking for the same sound all the time. Hal [Blaine] is the one who invented the concert toms. He came out with that sound, and if a guy went into a date without those drums...it wasn't even soundwise, but it was crucial sightwise. When Don Costa was alive and I'd get calls to do sessions with him, it was, "Bring your concert toms." I didn't even own concert toms, so I got the cartage company to rent me concert toms, and I eventually got a set. That's what I used on the Burnett show—8", 10", 12", and 14".

I had another incident where my drums were sent in with a two-headed bass drum. I put the cymbals up, walked out of the room, and when I came back, the engineer was taking my front head off. I flipped

because I had it stuffed with shredded paper and the sound of this drum was phenomenal. It was a 16 x 24 rosewood bass drum. My mouth fell open and I said, "Look, I don't come in here and touch your dials. At least you could have asked me. Put that head back on. I don't want to know about this. I tune these things a certain way." He put it back on and to this day I can't get the same sound that I had, and I very seldom use that set.

RF: Let's talk about some of the things you're most proud of and why.

SG: There was a live show on the air many years ago, maybe '56 or '57, called *Omni-bus*, and they did a whole show on music. There was a piece that Leonard Bernstein had written for Benny Goodman that we recorded later, after the show. It was an extremely difficult piece of music because the drum part had certain areas where your two hands were doing something independently of your two feet; each limb had its own chore to perform. It was a coordination of four different parts of my body playing four different things. It was a hard thing to play, and we did it on the show live. Benny didn't even do the show. Al Galladora, a clarinet player at ABC, a marvelous virtuoso, did it on the show. We recorded it with Benny, and for some reason, with Benny, it had to be done in sections. Benny was kind of weird anyway. When they got the date set for recording, I couldn't make it because I had another thing to do, so they called some-

body else. It wasn't the kind of thing where you come in and just sit down. They went in, but ended up having to call another session, and I went in and did it. Those things happen.

I loved a lot of things we used to do with Tony Bennett. We always had good writers like Marion Evans and Pat Williams. It was always good music and fun to play. And after the sessions we'd all go around to the pizza joint around the corner and carry on a little bit.

I did a jazz thing with Bill Potts on *Bye Bye Birdie* that was with Clark Terry, Ernie Royal, Milt Hinton, and all the guys that I'm proud of.

We just finished this thing with Ralph Burns on *Bert Rigby, You're A Fool*, a new Carl Reiner picture. Prior to doing the sessions I had to go in with Ralph and make click tracks with a woodblock so he could use it on the track later with the orchestra. We had a five-day call, and we finished in three days; that's how good the band was. On this picture, the closing credits were six or seven minutes; it had a click that changed, and it was a very big production thing. Finally, Ralph called me over and asked if we should try it without a click, and I said, "Yes, let's try it; we have nothing to lose." And we did it in one take.

I'm proud of having been associated with the Olympics. I did the Liberty Weekend thing in 1984. I did a Richard Rodgers special with Steve and Edie that won an award—a dynamite show. I did the Emmys

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for a long time, I did the Tonys and the Academy Awards. I did the Academy Awards in '84, and Steve Lawrence and Sammy Davis had a 12- or 14-minute medley of songs that went from one feel to another, totally different bags, with a 90- to 100-piece orchestra. We ran it down, and it was done in one take. I don't pat myself on the back, but I take pride in everything I do.

RF: What made you pick up a stick initially?

SG: This is going to sound funny, but when I was about 11, my parents took me to the movies to see *Strike Up The Band* with Mickey Rooney, and for some reason, I watched it and said, "I'd like to do that."

RF: Then did you bug your parents?

SG: Oh yeah, and they said, "No way. Play the violin or the saxophone or whatever." I gave in to the tenor saxophone, but I used to purposely get the worst sound it was possible to get—it sounded like a goose being run over—until it was, "You win." So we went out and got a pad, and I took one or two lessons, but most of what I do was self-taught.

RF: How did you teach yourself?

SG: I used to just play around with the pad. They got a teacher for me who told them I had promise, which after one or two lessons convinced them, and then they got a set of drums for me, if you could call them that. I just sat down and played. A friend I went to school with played clarinet. He would come over, and even before I got the drums he'd play the clarinet and I'd play on a pretzel can with a set of brushes or on an old banjo with the strings off, on the head. I used to go around and listen to bands and players, which reminds me of a funny story: The first time I met Buddy Rich he was with Tommy Dorsey's band at Steel Pier. I watched Buddy, and I went back-

stage and asked if I could have his autograph and a picture, and he said, "Get lost."

RF: Didn't that break your heart at 12 years old?

SG: It taught me a lot. As a matter of fact, Buddy and I became very good friends, and I brought it up to him and it cracked him up. Another time, I think I was about 15, Les Brown was playing at Hamids Pier, and I went up and asked if I could sit in. And they said yes, so I sat in with the band. Johnny Richards came in with a band, and I sat in with them, too.

I used to just watch people play. Now that I think about it, I used to find it sort of weird because I would tap my feet the

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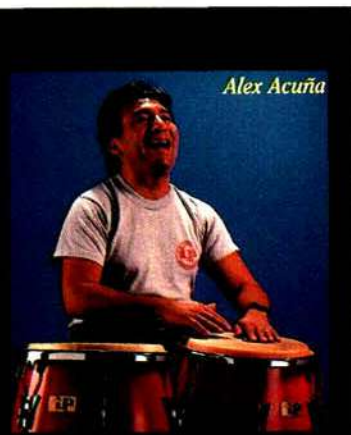
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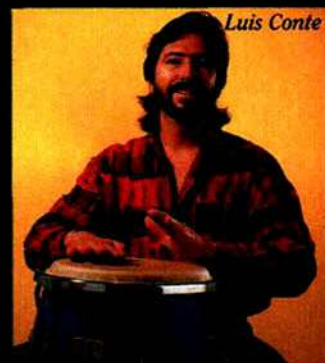
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same way the guys in the band were tapping their feet.

Soon I started playing in Jersey. I played with the high school gym band, and we played dances and things. I also used to work Saturdays and Sundays at a place called Daddy Lou's Bar. I worked with a sextet, and I was the only white guy. We'd go in there and work for \$5.00 from 7:00 at night until maybe 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning.

RF: And you were how old?

SG: I was about 14.

RF: How could you go into a bar?

SG: Atlantic City was a wide open town, and this is way back.

RF: Weren't your parents worried about you?

SG: No, they knew where I was. And then as things went on, I started going up to New York and working around there. Around 1946, I joined Sonny Dunham's band.

RF: Having worked with such a variety of people, what is the difference between playing with a singer and in an instrumental context?

SG: I have always approached it as though the singer were a jazz player—an instrumentalist. The singer would be just like the horn. Tony always had good music, Steve and Edie always had good music, Vic Damone, Diahann Carroll, you name it.

RF: You also worked with Count Basie.

SG: I did Tony Bennett's records for the last

10 or 12 years I was in New York, which was about the time that the rock 'n' roll trend started with the triplets. Everybody was playing triplets, and after a while, it would boggle your mind. Tony said he had two or three months in Europe with Basie's band, so I went and it was beautiful.

When we got back to New York, I went in to do a couple of sessions, and after playing all that nice music with that great band, I was starting to go bananas. Back to the triplets again. Rufus Jones was leaving Basie, so I went out and stayed with the band about seven months. This was about 1966.

RF: What was that like?

SG: Absolute joy. That band was so great to play with. Musically it gives you a chance to get into the music. It's a totally different way of playing. It's like dancing on sand. It just flows. It's the kind of music I like to play. I love live performance; there's nothing like it. In the studios you're buried.

RF: You also worked with the Buddy Rich band.

SG: While I was in New York, Buddy and I were good friends, and when Buddy would come into town and have to play a show, he would always call me to come in if the band had to play with the act. One time Buddy had a pinched nerve and he could barely move. He was just in agony, so they called me and I went out with the band to do about six one-nighters.

RF: What's the difference between playing

with a big band and a small band?

SG: When you're with a group, you can stretch out and play with each other a little more. With a big band, it's nice when you feel 16, 18 guys really locked together. Many say it's more confining. Not for me, though, because I don't remember what I did the last time, so it's never the same. Every time you play something, it's different, because of how everybody's feeling. When I worked with Sinatra, I could look at him and know what kind of a mood he was in. You have to play games and guess what kind of a mood whoever you're working with is in. If they're laid back and in a good mood, they want to settle into a nice groove. If they get nervous and they want to get off, you can see by the gestures. Working with Steve and Edie was funny, because sometimes she'd want it faster and he'd want it slower. I devised a thing where my right hand was playing where the time was and my left hand would be either a little ahead of it or a little behind. It sounded pretty weird. If they turned around and would ask, "What the hell was that?" I'd say, "Well, you got what you asked for." Lena Home was the same way. She'd want something slower or faster, and Lenny Hayton would be conducting and go the opposite way. When the show is over, you just walk away and don't get caught in between.

RF: What was it like working with Sinatra? How long did you work with him?



SG: On and off, seven years.

RF: Was he difficult to work with?

SG: He could be. But working with Frank was a groove sometimes. I don't think I could take it as a steady diet, though. Irv Cottier has been with him so long.

RF: What was required of you in that particular context?

SG: To play the way he would like the music to be played. I sometimes called it chopping wood. Nelson Riddle used to write some of those charts, and they were always regimented. You just kept going with the afterbeats and this and that. I worked with Frank with a sextet and a big band. I enjoyed working with him, but it just got to a point where I really don't like to play that way. Every time you sit down to play something, your mood is not always the same. There are times you really play aggressively, and they don't want that, but then if you lay back, they want it aggressive. When singers or arrangers say, "Just pick up the tempo a little bit," there really isn't that much difference; it's infinitesimal. Some people like it with that nervous feeling. There are times when everybody is laid back, and you have to get it going and keep it going.

RF: What was the situation that gave you the most creative freedom?

SG: People are going to think I'm crazy, but playing with a big band is where I experienced a lot of freedom. And yet people say, "The instruments are all play-

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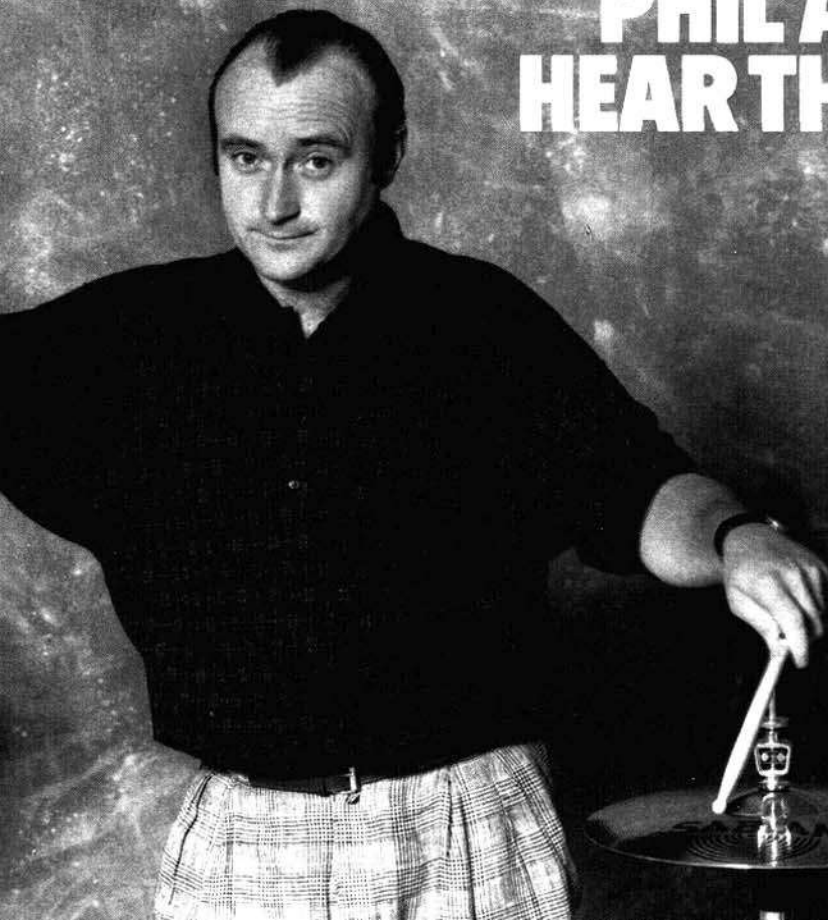


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ing notes on a chart." That's true on the drums, but you can interpret it differently every time.

RF: Even when you're reading a chart?

SG: Very few people really know how to write drum parts. A drum part, to me, should be like a small score—what the brass are playing, what the saxes are playing.... What's important should be accented with the brass. The way people write drum parts, they're guides. It makes it much easier if it's written like a small score, because you know exactly what is going down.

RF: You put your own band together a few years ago.

SG: In 1980, Al Hirt came into town, and we did an album with him. He liked the big band thing so much he decided to put one together. I went down to New Orleans and we talked. I came back and went to the Dick Grove School and got a lot of young players. And Al gave me a pretty good leeway, financially. The lowest-paid guy in the band was making \$550 a week, which in 1980, for the first time out with a band, was good, and that was guaranteed, work or no work. I moved down there, but things turned out differently than I had expected. I lived there for six and a half months—just enough to lose a lot of work here. But it was a good band, and I still think it could have gone. Unfortunately, the business aspects were set up totally wrong, but it was still fun.

RF: Do you ever just play around town?

SG: When I first came here I put together a little group, and we played Dante's for three nights. It cost me \$96.00. I object to the jazz clubs exploiting musicians for \$35 or \$50 a night. A lot of guys who do it are doing other things, so they do it for kicks. But when you have to make a living doing it, it's really difficult.

RF: What do you want at this stage of your life?

SG: Just to keep playing. I've tried a lot of different ventures. I used to do some comedy writing, and a lot of people said, "You should be a stand-up comic," but I just want to keep playing my drums. I'm not out to pasture by any means. I understand that the electronics are here and what they mean, and I feel very strongly that these people are phasing themselves out of business. When I see motion pictures or TV shows that are done in a garage with a machine, I strongly object to that. Technology is here to stay, let's face it, but they're never going to replace live players. I honestly believe it's going to come back around again. I don't like being denied doing what I love. That hurts me. I really enjoy doing what I do, and whatever it is, I want to do the best I can. I think my reputation by my peers is most important to me. A lot of people don't know who I am or what I stand for, but my peers know, and I'm really proud of that. I just want to keep on going, that's all.



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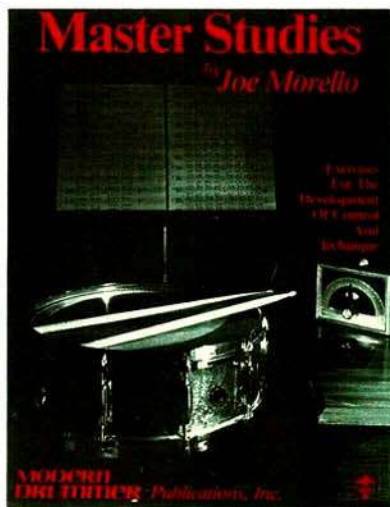
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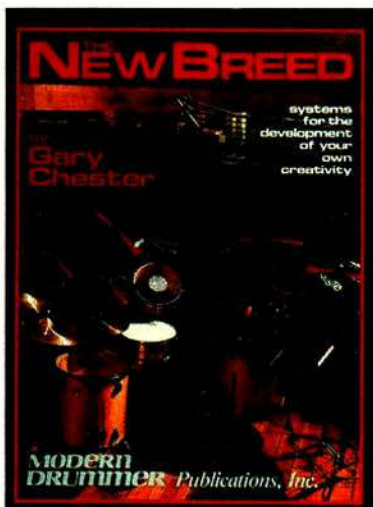
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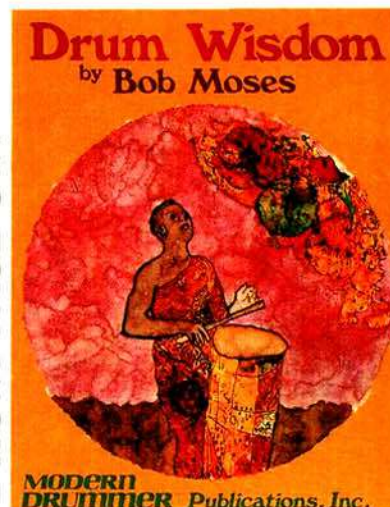
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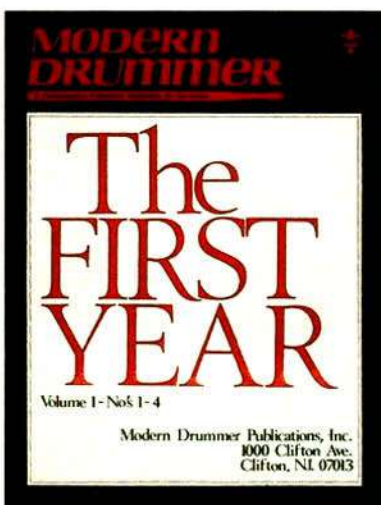
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High School. Recently, Bennett recollected his meeting with Evans. "He visited me in the band room at Santa Fe High. He brought me some heads and wanted me to use them in the marching band. I'd never seen a head like his before. It was a plastic sheet attached to a wooden hoop. I'm quite sure we used the heads at the American Band Directors Association Convention in Santa Fe in March of 1957. The heads held up well and were a big improvement over calf. In the rain and snow, calf heads would get soggy and you could easily put a stick through them. I played dance drums at the time, but I didn't use the plastic heads on my set. Skin heads were better; you couldn't use a brush on Chick's heads, because you couldn't get a smooth swish." According to Evans, Shacklette's marching band was the first in the country to use a *Mylar* head.

Evans' sales letter also found its way to Drum City, a percussion store in Hollywood, California, owned and operated by Remo Belli and Roy Harte. The young store owners were intrigued by Evans' description of his product and ordered several heads. After receiving the new heads, Belli wrote Evans indicating that he was "very impressed" with the product and offering to distribute them through his store. According to Belli, he was by then familiar with *Mylar* as a product, having used it in the decorations for a percussion fair, and he had once jokingly discussed its use as a drumhead with Bud Slingerland. In April 1957, Belli visited Evans in Santa Fe to see

Evans' operation and discuss business. Belli came away from the meeting feeling that Evans was not in a position to meet the volume demands that could arise for his product and was not, for various reasons, a person with whom he could do business. Evans, on the other hand, came away feeling that he had found a person who could help him get his fledgling business off the ground.

Belli returned to Los Angeles and in the subsequent months decided to start manufacturing *Mylar* heads as part of a Drum City operation that was already making a few percussion accessories. According to Belli, problems were starting to arise with some of Evans' heads that had been sold through Drum City; the tack-and-wooden-hoop mounting system would occasionally fail when put under high tension. Roy Harte, who was doing a great deal of session playing at the time, was testing them on the job and apparently running into problems with the *Mylar* tearing out from the hoops and denting badly.

At this point, seeking a solution to these problems, Belli was introduced by his accountant, Sid Gerwin, to Sam Muchnick—a Los Angeles chemist with a strong background in adhesives. Another key figure, Muchnick recalls his early encounter with the concept of a *Mylar* head: "Remo showed me a piece of *Mylar* stapled to a wooden hoop and asked what I could do to improve it. I said I'd play with it. I came up with a method of making a hat-shaped blank that

was inserted into an aluminum hoop."

Although generally well-suited for drum-head use, polyester film has two troublesome drawbacks: It will tend not to stick to adhesives, and although it has a great deal of tensile strength and will withstand heavy battering, it has a very weak tear strength and will rip easily once the membrane has been punctured. This continued to create problems in devising an effective mounting system for the material. "What I did," Muchnick says, "was to combine an adhesive and mechanical bond." Muchnick's mounting system involved punching holes around the edge of a round *Mylar* blank and then inserting this edge into an aluminum channel shaped into a hoop. The channel was filled with a liquid adhesive that would flow through the holes in the *Mylar* and, when dry, effectively lock the membrane into the aluminum hoop. In another refinement, Muchnick would apply heat to the *Mylar* blank to form a hat-shaped head that would fit over a drum shell and effectively eliminate any chance of creasing and tucking in the head. Muchnick's design endured; it is the basic mounting system used in Remo *Weather King* heads.

During this time, Evans was going ahead with refinements on his own drumhead. Apparently independently of Muchnick, Evans had come up with a similar system of imbedding the perforated edge of a head in polyester resin. Evans formed the resin in a circular trough and removed it from this trough when the resin had hardened around the edge of the head. Consequently, his head had a flexible resin hoop reinforced internally with butcher twine—as opposed to Muchnick's stiffer aluminum channel. Evans was similarly molding the *Mylar* into a hat shape using a circular heating element that was applied to the head. Evans had designed and built machinery capable of producing high-quality heads and was manufacturing them in his home with the help of his family.

When he became aware that Belli was manufacturing heads made from *Mylar*, Evans filed suit in Los Angeles County Superior Court, charging Remo Inc. with illegally appropriating his idea. He asked for a quarter-million dollars in damages. In his pretrial deposition, Belli built his defense on several points. He pointed out that Irwin, and not Evans, held a patent on the idea of a polyester film head, that several other people around the country—including instrument-maker Virgil Partch, Irving Faberman of New York City, Joe Grolimund of Selmer, and George Nelson of the Vega Banjo Company—had experimented with the idea prior to or at the same time as Evans; and further, that he, Belli, had been advised by his patent attorney that although the mounting system of a *Mylar* head was possibly patentable, the use of *Mylar* as a material for drumheads was probably not patentable. Since the mounting system being used for Belli's head was of his own design, it was essentially his own unique product. He also pointed out that in DuPont's origi-

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nal patent descriptions of *Mylar*, its use as a material for drumheads was specifically mentioned and that DuPont salesmen had tried at various times to interest instrument companies in manufacturing *Mylar* heads.

Evans had hoped to fight Belli's assertions in court, maintaining that the idea for the product had come directly from him, but he did not have the means to retain lawyers outright and consequently hired lawyers on a contingency basis (i.e., his attorneys would be paid a percentage of whatever damages he could collect in the case).

Late in the summer of 1958, Evans' lawyers advised him to accept an offer from Remo Inc. for an out-of-court settlement. According to Evans, he was paid \$5,000 in the settlement and came away with \$2,800 after the lawyers were paid their fee.

By this time the Ludwig Drum Company had also gone into the *Mylar* head business, and were running into their own legal problems. Bill Ludwig, Jr. says, "We were buying *Mylar* from DuPont and tacking it on wooden hoops—like Chick's head—but it kept pulling out. We kept testing different methods, and one day I walked into my father's office and saw him bending metal around the edge of *Mylar* with a pair of pliers. He had come up with a system of mechanically interlocking the head material between two metal hoops." Ludwig patented the mounting system and started producing heads in this manner.

Soon after this head went on the market, Bud Slingerland—of the Slingerland Drum Co., Ludwig's crosstown drum manufacturing rival—came out with his own head, which copied exactly the Ludwig mounting system. The Ludwig company sued.

"It took a year for the case to come to trial, and the trial lasted five days," Ludwig says. "Bud stood up in court and admitted that he told his people to copy our design. I thought we had him nailed. But we lost the case because the judge—who, incidentally, was not a patent judge—decided our patent was invalid. He cited the legal concept of *prior art*, which holds that the utilization of a particular system that has been used before in other applications is not patentable. They cited several examples of products that had been clamped in a rolled and interlocking way similar to our head mounting system. Their examples included Pullman car window screens, rattan chair seats, and the top and bottoms of beer cans." Ludwig appealed the case to a higher court but, in spite of spending "a couple of hundred thousand dollars" on legal fees, the decision of the lower court was upheld. "We went to Bud Slingerland after losing in court and asked him to at least put our patent number on his drumhead so that we would have a better case in protecting both our companies against a Japanese copy of the product," Ludwig says.

In Minnesota, Irwin—who still held the original patent on a *Mylar* head and who had probably built the first polyester film drumhead—was considering his own legal

options. Irwin says, "Although we had no plans to commercialize the head, we did think about licensing it. When Remo came out with his head, we had some correspondence with him and we were thinking about going to court. But I didn't think it was a good bet. We were getting letters from his attorneys, and DuPont said that if it came to litigation they would back Remo and Ludwig and the major companies. They say that today the cost of going to court over an issue like this can run into the millions. In retrospect, I sometimes think we should have sold stock in my patent and, in that way, raised the money to go into litigation."

After successfully introducing his *Mylar Weather King* head to the drum market in

1957, Belli, with the help of Muchnick, worked closely with the DuPont Corporation to develop a grade of *Mylar* best suited for drumheads and to solve some of the consistency problems that arose with the mass production of *Mylar* heads. Occasionally, *Mylar* would shatter when hit, and this—as well as other problems—needed to be addressed. Using the talents of Muchnick, and later of Don Hartry, Belli continued to improve and refine synthetic heads, and today operates a successful company that has been responsible for many advances in the manufacturing of percussion equipment. Muchnick eventually parted ways with Belli and went on to develop the first *Kevlar* woven-fabric head.

When asked about the generally held

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perception that he was the inventor of the polyester film drumhead, Remo responds, "All I've ever said is that I was the one to help develop the Remo *Weather King* drumhead along with Sam Muchnick. It seems like the idea for a product is often in the air at a certain time. People send me ideas for percussion products from all over the world, and in a given time period I'll get three or four that are the same thing. The double bass drum pedal is a good example of a product that occurred to more than one inventor at about the same time. Making an idea happen is about getting up at 5:00 in the morning and going to bed at midnight, or getting on a plane and going somewhere when you don't want to."

After settling out of court in his lawsuit

with Belli, Evans continued to produce *Mylar* heads at his home in Santa Fe. Often, his wife would make the heads at home while he went on selling trips to music stores. Evans made copies of Belli's letter expressing interest in his drumhead and gave them to music store owners to demonstrate that his was the original *Mylar* head. In late-1958, a salesman showed one of Evans' heads to Bob Beals, a jewelry/music store owner in Dodge City, Kansas. Beals was intrigued by the product much the way Belli had been when he first saw it, and went to see Evans in New Mexico. On December 1, 1958, Beals and Evans, along with Beals' brother Harold and his business partner Larry Drehmer, formed a corporation known as Evans Products Inc. for the purpose of

making and selling Evans' drumhead. By this time, other manufacturers were starting to take note of Belli's success with the *Weather King* head and were becoming interested in an association with a head-maker such as Evans. Beals said that he signed the contract with Evans just one day before a representative from Grossman Music, parent company of Rogers' Drum Co., was scheduled to meet with Evans in Santa Fe.

Evans and his wife moved to Dodge City, but shortly thereafter Evans became dissatisfied with the association with Evans Products, sold his share to Beals, and returned to Santa Fe. The Evans name stayed with Beals, and Evans agreed to limit his own production of drumheads. But with the money from his buyout he tooled up again and, staying within the production quotas of his agreement with Beals, was soon back in the drumhead business. "Eventually," Evans says, "Beals called me from Kansas and said that every store they were trying to stock with heads was already stocked with mine. So I sold out to them a second time. Part of that agreement was that I wouldn't make heads for the next ten years."

Evans' days as a drumhead manufacturer were essentially over, but even today, at 85 years of age, he envisions new product ideas and fabricates a few *Mylar* heads in his living room to sell or give away to local Santa Fe players. He is philosophical about his failures and lack of sophistication as an entrepreneur. "I'm just a damned old drummer; I didn't realize what would happen in the big leagues. If I had had brain one, I could have gotten a small-business loan and started a real business. I had a hell of a good reputation, and that's why the company retained my name."

Today, synthetic heads come in an almost countless variety of colors, thicknesses, and muffling designs. But the vast majority are still made from polyester film, and basic mounting systems developed in the 1950s are still in use on most of them. It is likely that the spirit of entrepreneurship and competition that resulted in the modern *Mylar* head will continue to operate and stimulate new advances in drum membrane technology. Belli has indicated that his company is experimenting with new materials. Muchnick is convinced that *Kevlar* can be used successfully as a head material if manufactured and marketed correctly. Evans has some ideas for a "quick-change" head that can accommodate either brush or stick playing. And the Asahi Chemical Cloth Co. of Japan recently introduced the Compo line of *Kevlar*/polyester composite drumheads.

The desire to be successful with the introduction of a new and important product spurred the development and refinement of the weatherproof drumhead. It also created legal problems and hard feelings between some of those involved. Ultimately, however, the beneficiaries of the working out of this process in a free-enterprise system have been drummers themselves.



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Sunday, September 17, 1989

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Dave will be performing with the exciting group **Eyewitness**, which includes the dynamic **Manolo Badrena** on percussion.

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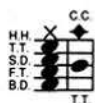
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Rock Around The Set



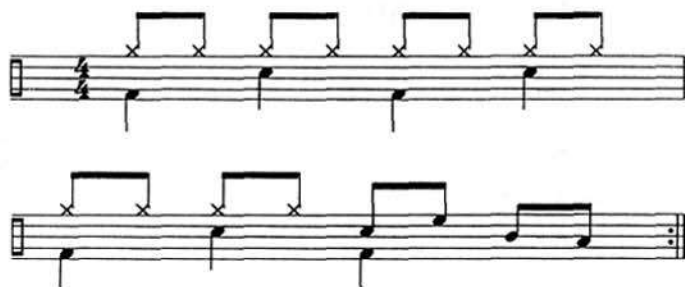
Photo by Rick Malkin

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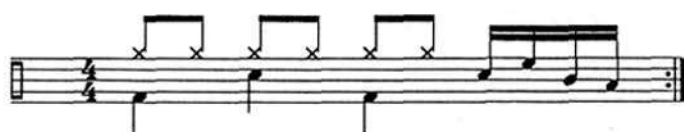


Steve Smith said something in a *Modern Drummer* interview that stuck in my mind. He talked about throwing away the "road maps" he once used to get around his drumset to create fills. He wanted to get away from his comfortable old notions and preconceived ways of doing things. He didn't want to be afraid to explore new, possibly more difficult, territory. But Steve is a very accomplished drummer who, at this point in his career, can drive with his eyes closed. Most people need some directions to get where they want to go. I have designed some exercises to facilitate getting around the drumset. They are very simple and easy to remember. I call them the "ones," "twos," "threes," "fours," "fives," and "sixes." The names are derived from how many times an individual drum is struck before moving to the next one.

The "ones" are meant to be played by alternating the sticking, RLRL, for each drum. The first "ones" can be played at any tempo from 100 to 200 beats per minute (bpm).



The second "ones" exercise should be played at a medium tempo, about 120 bpm.



These "twos" aren't so terrible. They're among the most useful "road maps" in creating fills. Once again, use alternating sticking. You'll notice you can now lead with your dominant hand.

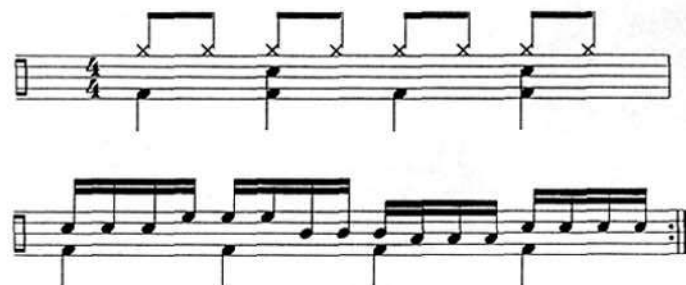


The "threes" are tricky because you must alternate your lead hand, and at some point you must cross over to maintain a consistent single-stroke sticking pattern. Some people do a double stroke with either the right or left hand, but to me, this never sounds as powerful or as even. Practice this slowly until you've got it down,

then blow the roof off the sucker.



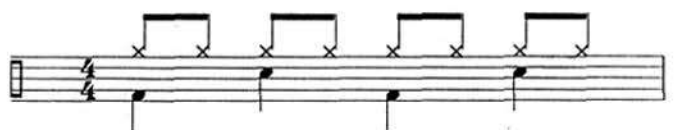
Here's a popular variation on the "threes." Alex Van Halen, among many others, uses it.



The "fours" are almost anti-climatic. You will find them much easier because the dominant hand can lead again. But just because they're easier does not mean they're not as useful.



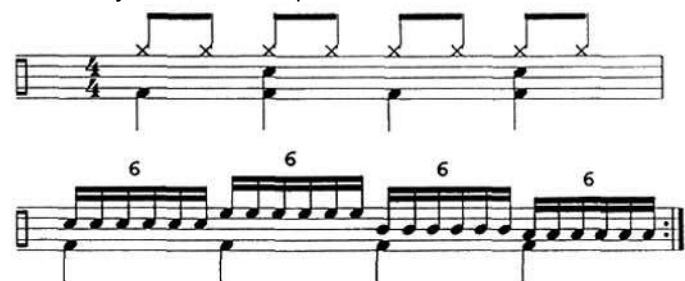
The "fives" create a propulsive, broken rhythm that makes an interesting fill.



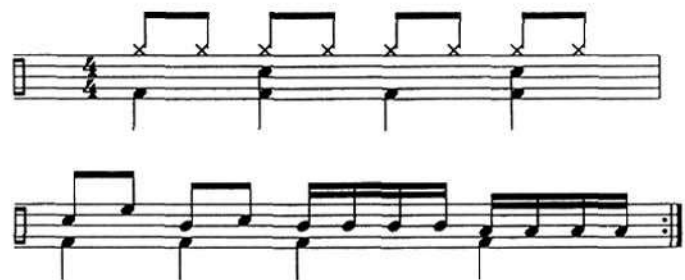


How do you create fills from all of these exercises? First, maybe we ought to talk about what a fill does. A good fill not only relieves the monotony of a straight beat, it adds excitement. It propels the music from one section to the next. Sometimes it accents the rhythmic figures of another instrument or voice; sometimes it plays against them. Often it stands alone. That does not mean it should stick out like a sore thumb. A fill should always have a purpose. It should not be thrown in just because the timekeeper got bored.

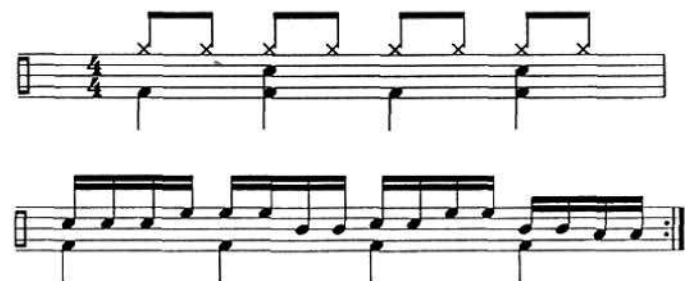
Sometimes as you play and listen to the music, something will occur to you that will lead you into the next section. It may be perfect, but more often than not, you may need to work on a fill before attempting it in performance. As the saying goes, the best improvisations are the most well-rehearsed. Different combinations of the "ones," "twos," "threes," and "fours" will create some original-sounding fills of your own. Do two "threes" to make a "six." Or try these, for example:



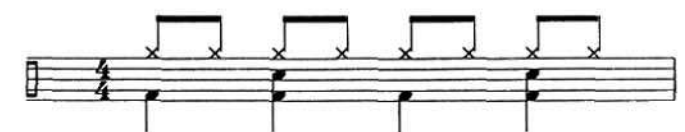
"Ones" and "Fours"



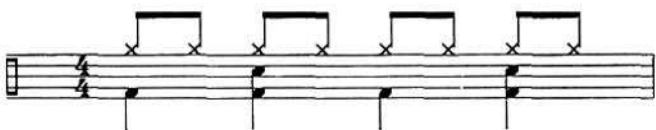
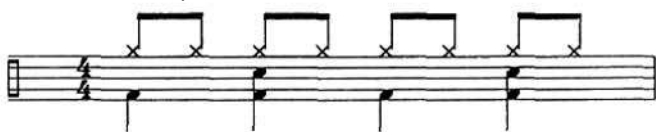
"Threes" and "Twos"



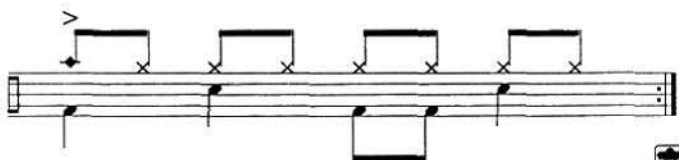
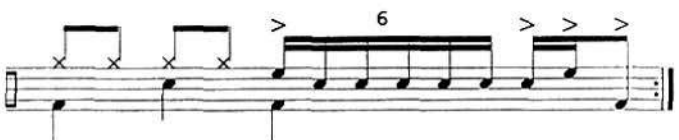
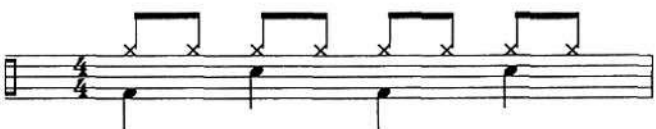
"Fours" and "Twos"



Incorporate some rudiments with "ones," "twos," "threes," and "fours." For example:



Here are some advanced fills. Notice how they pertain to what we've just discussed.



BRAZILIAN PERCUSSION MANUAL

by Daniel Sabanovich

Publisher:

Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.

16380 Roscoe Blvd.,

P.O. Box 10003

Van Nuys CA 91410-0003

Price: \$9.95

I guess I should be flattered by the amount of wholesale quotes Mr. Sabanovich pulls out of an article I wrote five years ago for *Modern Percussionist* magazine for this book. In any case (and in spite of the fact that I'm merely a passing reference in his bibliography), I'm

always glad for wider dissemination of the beauty and power of Brazilian percussion, and this book does do many things right.

In this 57-page work, there are photographs, technical playing explanations, and a pronunciation guide for all the principal instruments of the escolas de samba in Brazil. There are also some tips to help guide the reader to the proper "feel" of samba. And the inclusion of two model pieces in ten-part score form gives a percussion ensemble an opportunity to play samba together. The last part of the book details some drumset patterns, with an emphasis on samba. The author also includes a bibliography and a discography of samba groups and drumset players.

The title of this book suggests to me that this would be a manual much more comprehensive in scope, in terms of inclusion of some more Brazilian rhythms (such as maracatu, maxixe, frevo, capoeira, etc.), and some more generic instruments such as the caxixi (a seed-filled wicker shaker), the berimbau (a single-string bowed instrument), the pau de chuva (rain stick), the zabumba (a small bass drum), and certainly the triangle. The book might more accurately be called a samba manual, or part one of a two- or three-part series on Brazilian percussion.

The discography section of the *Brazilian Percussion Manual* is good, but there are several significant omissions. Samba-wise, the recordings of each year's Carnival are available on Top Tape and RCA records, and probably should have been included. Also, mention should have been made of drummers such as Marcio Bahia (with Hermeto Pascoal), Nene (with Hermeto and Elis Regina), and Ze Eduardo Nazario (with Egberto Gismonti, Milton Nascimento, and Grupo Um), not to mention records by NaNa Vasconcelos, Djavan, Simone, and Gal Costa. (The latter three are singers.) All in all, however, this manual is a valiant effort at whetting the appetite of the curious, non-third-world percussionist.

—Gordon Gottlieb

DRUMMING PATTERNS

by Chuck Braman

Publisher:

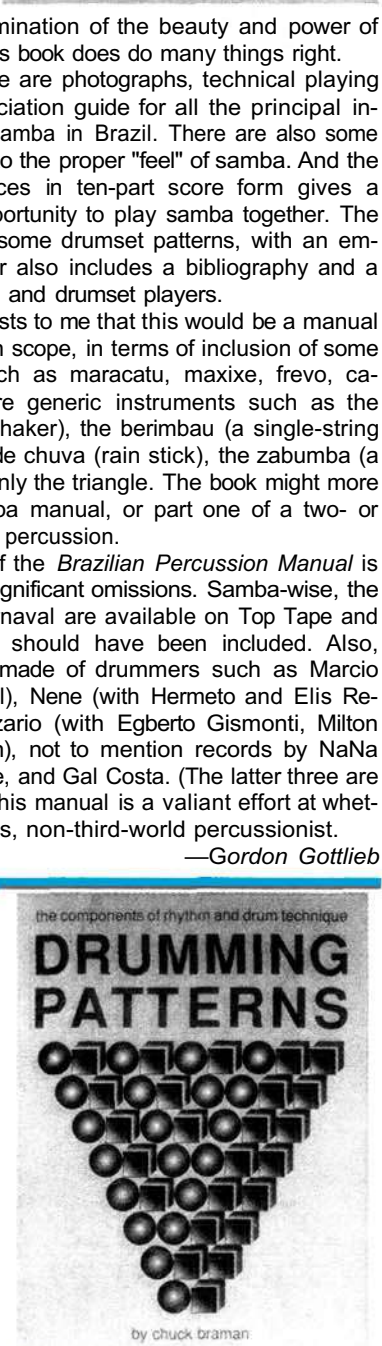
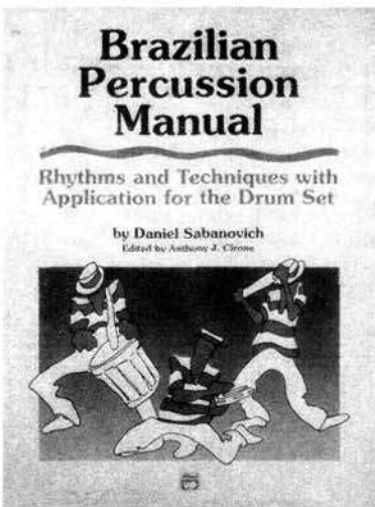
Drumstroke Publications

136 Beech Street

Berea OH 44017

Price: \$20.00

In the preface of this book the author states, "*Drumming Patterns* is an encyclopedia of technique and rhythm, rather than a method book to be practiced from beginning to end." Calling this book an encyclopedia of rhythm is not an overstatement, because within the 175



pages (!) of this work, Mr. Braman has put together an exhaustive amount of drumming information. Because of the large amount of material, drummers might find this book intimidating at first, but with a little perseverance there is a lot of excellent information to be had here. Because of space, this review can only touch on some of the general points discussed in this book.

Drumming Patterns is basically broken down into two main sections: snare drum patterns and drumset patterns. But don't let me give the impression that this book is just a listing of exercises. On the contrary, there is quite a lot of text that thoroughly explains the numerous examples. As for the examples themselves, they are extremely clear and very well notated. The production quality of *Drumming Patterns* is very high. The time and effort put forth in its creation must have been considerable.

As for the first section on snare drum patterns, such topics as sticking patterns, embellishment patterns, accent patterns, flam patterns, single-stroke patterns, double/buzz-stroke patterns, and roll patterns are discussed. At the end of this part of the book, several fold-out pages are included that show ways to vary the previous exercises presented. This is done by opening up a fold-out page, and then turning to the sections to which it applies. This allows the student to see both the old exercises and the ways they are to be interpreted. It's an excellent idea that works well.

To quote the author, "Part one of *Drumming Patterns* identifies all the basic patterns of stick (two-limb) technique. Part two converts these patterns into rhythms, and then applies these rhythmic patterns to various drumset (four-limb) solo and accompaniment drumming styles." In this drumset section such topics as patterns with single and triple strokes, rock/funk patterns, jazz patterns, Brazilian patterns, non-independent patterns, and solo patterns are discussed. At the ends of each of these sections are more fold-out pages, which again offer new ways to apply the previous concepts. Finally, the appendixes at the end of the book include a lot of good conceptual ideas on drumming.

Overall, *Drumming Patterns* is an excellent book that looks at technique in a slightly different way, focusing on what the author calls "the essential patterns of technique." This book also comes with a helpful cassette tape that explains how to use *Drumming Patterns*. The only problem with a book like this is its scope, in that it tries to cover so much. It could have easily been divided into two shorter books. However, with patience and the right attitude, this book can be of great benefit to your drumming.

—William F. Miller

DRUM TUNING

by Larry Nolly

Publisher:

Drumstix Publishing

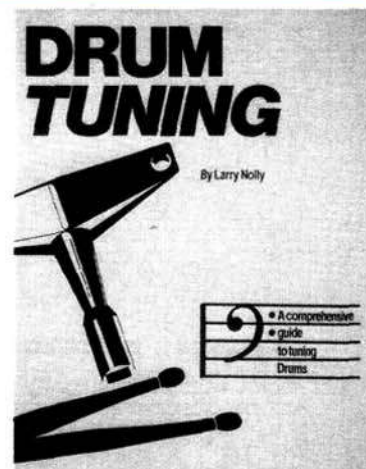
P.O. Box 9216

Wilmington DE 19809-9216

Price: \$7.95

Perhaps because the drums are not a melodic instrument per se, tuning them seems to be a mystery to many beginners, and even to some not-quite novices. The subject certainly comes up often enough in *MD's* pages, with top artists being asked about their own personal tuning methods. It can obviously be quite a subjective topic. Based on the premise that there really is no "correct" way to tune drums, but that there are certain guidelines to follow that will ensure that they sound as good as possible, Larry Nolly's *Drum Tuning* sets out to spell out in plain English just what some of those guidelines are.

The book begins at a very basic level, describing exactly what a drumset consists of (bass drums, snare, floor toms, etc.), making it



clear that Nolly feels that tuning is one of the first things someone studying drumset should comprehend. From there he gets more specific to the topic and explains, through the use of a couple of charts (based on an article from the February '84 issue of *MD*), how certain tuning decisions will affect a drum's sound and performance. Once the reader has gotten this far, he or she is ready to begin experimenting on an actual set, with Nolly clearly explaining which rods to turn, how much, and when. Also covered in this relatively short book (23 pages) are topics such as signals to change heads, what kind of heads to choose, tuning power toms, cutting holes in heads, muffling, tuning a head to itself, tuning top and bottom heads to each other, and tuning each drum to the others in the set.

Throughout *Drum Tuning*, Nolly doesn't usually push his preferences, but rather advises experimentation. One exception is the matter of drum-mounting hardware. Where some people believe that it can adversely affect the optimum sound of a drum—at least one company's existence is based on this theory—Nolly insists that it really doesn't matter, and that different tuning and/or experimenting with drum placement can alleviate the problem. In any event, Nolly generally succeeds at clarifying an often baffling area, and *Drum Tuning* is a pretty good place to look to for the basics of the subject.

—Adam Budofsky



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HOUSTON, TX

FIRST ANNUAL BUDDY RICH SCHOLARSHIP CONCERT



Photo by Laine Wilser

Back row, left to right: Louie Bellson, Gregg Bissonette, Jim Chapin, Vinnie Colaiuta, Al Miller, Dave Weckl, Steve Gadd, and Joe Morello. Front row, left to right: Dom Famularo, Steve Arnold, and Cathy Rich.

The sound of drums filled the air when the first annual Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship Concert was held this past April in New York. Many of the world's greatest drummers were on hand to pay tribute to the late virtuoso/legend by performing songs from the Buddy Rich library with the band that made them famous. The show was presented in the round on the rotating stage of the Westbury Music Fair, on Long Island. The benefit performance was hosted by the Long Island Drum Center, in association with Manny's Music and Scabeba Entertainment.

"We are here for one reason and one reason alone," began Dom Famularo, emcee for the evening. "And that's to honor the world's greatest drummer, Buddy Rich."

After an introductory number by the Buddy Rich Big Band (featuring Danny D'Imperio on drums), movie screens were lowered over the stage to show a vintage 1940 clip of Buddy with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra on the classic "Hawaiian War Chant." Buddy's lightning-fast tom-tom work captivated the audience almost five decades after it had originally been filmed.

Famularo then kicked off the evening's feature spots by playing on Buddy's arrangement of the Earth, Wind & Fire hit, "Fantasy." Dom's fills and solo spots spotlighted his rapid-fire double-bass technique. Dom was followed by Long Island drum teacher and veteran big-band drummer Al Miller, who swung hard on two tunes with the band.

The first standing ovation of the night was given to Joe Morello. Using the stick

and brush work that made him famous during his 12-year stint with the Dave Brubeck Quartet, as well as with Marion McPartland and Stan Kenton, Morello drove the band effortlessly, and brought the audience to its feet. Joe even managed to work in his routine where he places one brush flat at the top of the drum and rolls it down to the bottom, creating a single-stroke roll effect. When the audience quieted down again, Morello simply said about Buddy, "He was just one of a kind."

A brief break was then taken from the music to present the Buddy Rich Lifetime Achievement Award to Mel Lewis. The award was accepted on behalf of Mel by his two daughters. A telegram from Phil Collins in tribute to Buddy was also read;

Phil promised to be present if the tribute were held again next year. Later, the first annual Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship was presented to an aspiring drummer from Long Island, 17-year-old Toby Ralph. This year's award was a \$5,000 scholarship for the Berklee School of Music in Boston. Toby's winning performance was chosen by the drummers who participated in the Rich tribute.

An original vocal and drum tribute was next performed by Jim Chapin, noted drummer and author and father of the late singer Harry Chapin. Harry's widow was instrumental in organizing a collection in the lobby for cans of food donated by the audience, to be distributed to the needy by the Long Island Cares program.

Dave Weckl, fresh from a tour with Chick Corea, performed next, playing the funky "Mercy, Mercy" and the up-tempo "Bugle Call Rag." He later spoke of the community spirit of the evening: "It's nice, the family of drummers," he said. "We're all together again."

A pair of standing ovations came after the intermission. The first was for double-bass pioneer Louie Bellson, who performed on the exciting "Carnaby Street" section of his own composition, "The London Suite." The accomplished author and composer—voted into the Halls Of Fame of both *MD* and the Percussive Arts Society—mesmerized the audience with an extended solo.

Steve Gadd was the only drummer of the night not to play a lengthy solo. However, his infectious groove playing and impeccably tasteful fills on "Just In Time" and "Basically Blues" brought the audience to its feet yet again. When the cheering subsided, he too paid tribute to Rich: "Buddy gave 110 percent all the time. It's nice to be part of something that says 'thank you' to Buddy."

Next came Gregg Bissonette. Applying his experience from Maynard Ferguson's big band, Gregg performed "In A Mellow Tone" and "Time Check" with the band. With his long platinum-blond hair flying,



Steve Gadd, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Dave Weckl climaxed the show with an exchange of solo licks.

Photo by Laine Wilser



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Gregg Bissonette and Louie Bellson traded double-bass phrases.



Photo by Laine Wilser

Toby Ralph, recipient of the first Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship.

he surprised some of the rockers in the audience with his solid swinging feel before breaking into an action-packed solo.

When Bissonette walked to the center stage microphone, he described Rich as "the greatest of all inspirations." Looking back on his youth, he recalled sitting on his living room floor practicing to Buddy Rich records on their album jackets.

After performing solo, Bissonette then took part in a drum battle with Bellson. The two generations fought it out, each

drummer smiling approvingly and listening intently as the other played. After trading solos, the two played together, with their four bass drums and many tom-toms and cymbals rocking the theater.

Rich's daughter, Cathy, who sang on Buddy's *Big Swing Face* album at the age of 12, performed "Them There Eyes" with the band (accompanied by Steve Arnold on drums). Cathy's performance was followed by a dance routine featuring her four-year-old son, Nicholas. Following in

the footsteps of his grandfather—who began his career as a child tap dancer—the youngster danced to Michael Jackson's "Bad."

The last drummer to perform solo with the band was Vinnie Colaiuta. Vinnie managed to infuse his own inimitable playing style into such Rich classics as "Big Swing Face" and "Ya Gotta Try," while still retaining a solid, swinging feel.

The evening concluded with a classic three-way drumming exchange between Vinnie, Steve Gadd, and Dave Weckl. The three opened their feature in a humorous vein when Steve counted a quick four and the three drummers simultaneously launched into the classic drum pattern from "Wipeout." Following that, Steve set the groove for a Latin rhythm, on which the three studio giants first traded solos, and later climaxed the evening by playing unison figures.

As the audience filed out, they passed one of Buddy's old drumsets on display in the lobby. Although the throne where he once sat was now vacant, drummers and fans alike stopped to stare—some reverently—at the tools used by Buddy to create his drumming magic.

—Michael Kohn and Rick Van Horn



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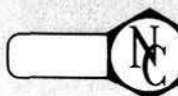
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NEW AND NOTABLE

PURECUSSION NE SERIES DRUMS AND TRIGGER SET

PureCussion recently introduced their new NE series drums, which now accept all brands of heads. As with all PureCussion improvements, a retrofit kit is available to allow owners of the current tuneable drums to convert their kit. PureCussion states that now the portability feature of their drums, combined with a greater access to a wider selection of drumheads, will give players an even higher comfort level while traveling.

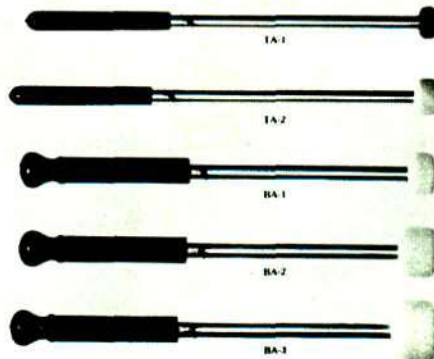
Also introduced was PureCussion's Trigger Set. According to the manufacturer, specially designed triggers give 360-degree head contact without actually touching the head, with a mounting position only possible on PureCussion drums. A head-surface-mounted trigger is available for standard snare drums. Packaged individually, the new PureCussion triggers allow players to add one, two, or more PureCussion drums to their conventional kits as trigger sources without giving up the feel of playing on heads versus pads. PureCussion drums, with their RIMS drum mounts, adapt to any manufacturer's hardware. PureCus-

sion has also entered into distribution agreements with Collarlock, ddrum, and wind chime manufacturer Spectrasound. **PureCussion, Inc., 5957 West 37th St., Minneapolis, MN 55416.**

M&K PRODUCTIONS OFFERS LES DEMERLE VIDEO

M&K Video Productions recently announced the latest addition to its T.O.P. (Today's Outstanding Performers) Series videos: *Les Demerle—Rock Fusion Drum Set Applications: Complete Lesson Package #1*. The package contains a 75-minute hi-fi stereo video and a book with transcriptions of drum charts and exercises demonstrated in the video. Topics included are: live rock/fusion studio performances by Transfusion, applying rudiments to the drumset, developing finger control, solo techniques, understanding stickings, one-on-one personal discussions with Les, and "a whole lot of drumming." **M&K Productions, Dept. 102, 818 Green Ridge Circle, Langhorne, PA 19047.**

SILVER FOX QWICKSILVER MALLET



Silver Fox has added *Qwicksilver* multi-tom and bass drum mallets to its existing line. *Qwicksilver* tom mallets have high-alloy, 1/2"-diameter silver anodized aluminum shafts with non-slip black vinyl grips, and are available with either hard felt balls or high-impact black acetal balls. *Qwicksilver* bass drum mallets have high-alloy, 5/8"-diameter, silver anodized aluminum shafts with densi-foam comfort grips and an articulation ball at the end of the handle. They are available in three

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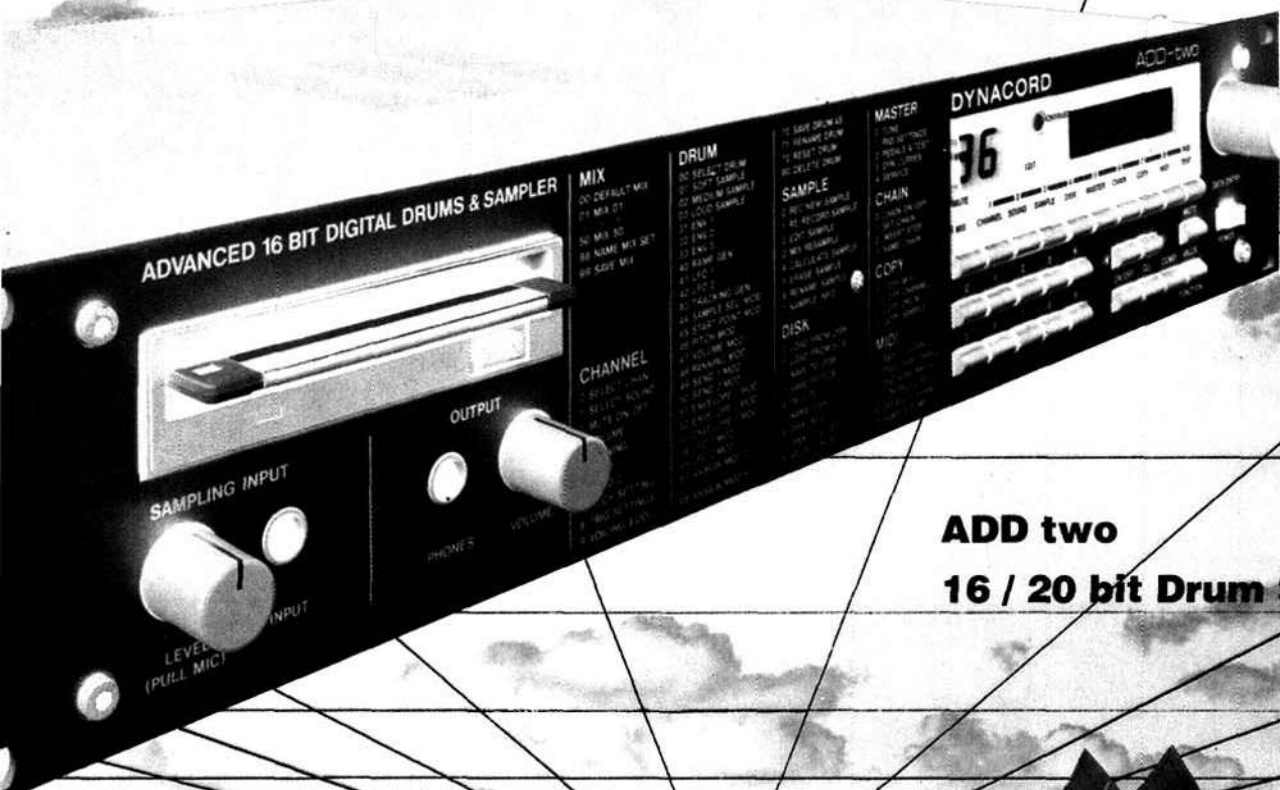
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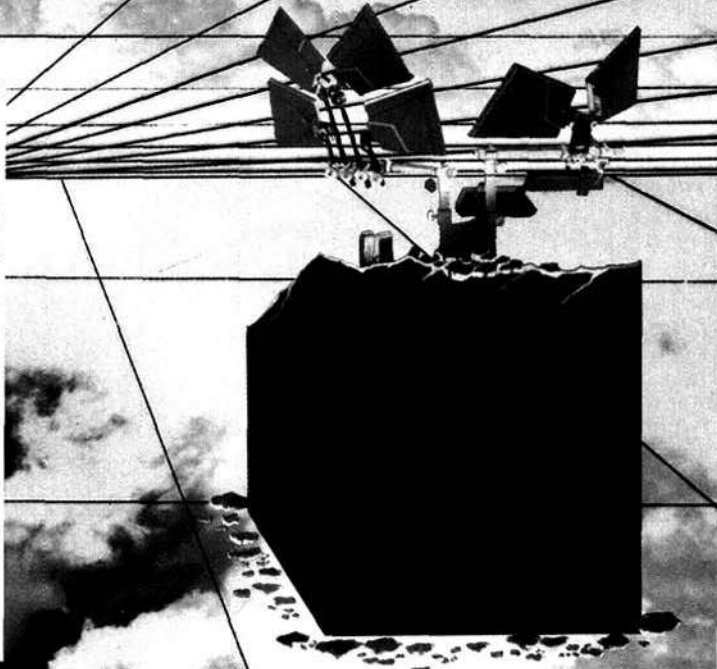
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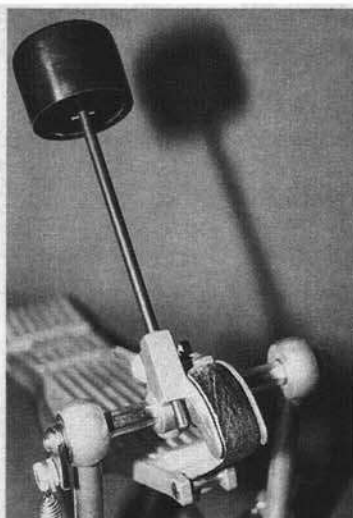
sizes, with premium grade hard felt balls. Silver Fox Percussion, P.O. Box 06884, Fort Meyers, FL 33906, (813) 332-4141.

VATER PERCUSSION TIMPANI MALLET

Vater Percussion now manufactures a line of timpani mallets for private label distribution to retailers and wholesalers. According to the company, these mallets are manufactured with hard white rock maple shafts and very high-quality felt. Models available are: *Staccato*, *Ultra Staccato*, *General*, and *Legato*. Vater also has timbale sticks available in three sizes—3/8", 7/16", and 1/2"—in both hickory and maple. **Vater Percussion, Inc., 270 Centre St., Holbrook, MA 02343. Tel: (617) 767-1877, Fax (617) 767-0010.**

BACKBEATER BASS DRUM BEATER

Meisel Music, Inc. now offers the *Backbeater* bass drum beater, which the company says is designed to give every drum-



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Meisel Music, P.O. Box 980, Springfield, NJ 07081, (201) 379-5000.

PRIMERA MAC-COMPATIBLE DRUM SOFTWARE

Primera Software has made available a new drumming program called *Different Drummer*. The program makes use of the Macintosh computer's graphic display and "point and click" interface in an effort to improve musicians' productivity and bring drum programming into the large "enthusiast market."

Different Drummer plays digitized sounds on the Macintosh, and over MIDI. It includes a pattern editor, song editor, jam window, and centralized instrument setups. Drum tracks created with *Different Drummer* are compatible with all major sequencer programs, through the standard MIDI file format. Patterns in *Different Drummer* support notes as fine as 256th notes, with triplets, quintuplets, septuplets, and nine levels of accenting. Patterns may be in one of 35 time signatures. **Primera Software, 650 Cragmont Ave., Berkeley, CA 94708, (415) 525-3000.**

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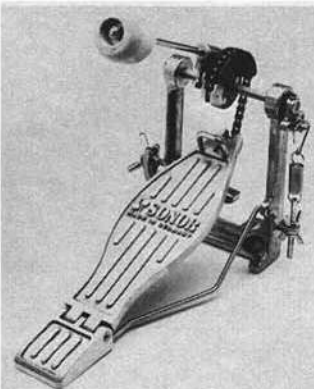
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NEW PRODUCTS FROM SONOR



Sonor has introduced the new *Hilite* distortion-free drum system. According to Sonor, the *Hilite* offers improved sound output through a

built-in isolation mounting system. This system eliminates any direct contact between any metal on the drum and the drum's maple shell, thus preventing common distortion and increasing vibrational energy transfer. The drum's lug system, tom holders, and floor tom leg mounts are isolated from the shell by specially developed rubber insulators. In addition, the screws that lead through the shell are insulated. The *Hilite* system is available in two versions: The *Hilite Exclusive*, and the *Hilite*. The *Hilite Exclusive* features copper-plated hardware

and is available in black, black diamond, or red maple finish. The *Hilite* comes with chrome-plated hardware and is available in black, black diamond, creme lacquer, and red maple.

Sonor has also introduced a new bass drum pedal, the Z 9390. It features a durable, lightweight construction, and has been specifically designed for the drummer who seeks a smooth pedal with fast action. The Z 9390 features roller or bronze bearings on its axle, center piece, heel plate, and foot plate. The pedal also comes equipped with a newly shaped beater ball, and features lightweight alloy castings. Other features include noise-eliminating mufflers for the chain, versatile adjustments for spring tension, foot plate, and beater, and an easy-to-handle clamp for the bass drum hoop. **Sonor, c/o Korg USA, 89 Frost St., Westbury, NY 11590, (516) 333-1900.**

NEW PRO-MARK PRODUCTS

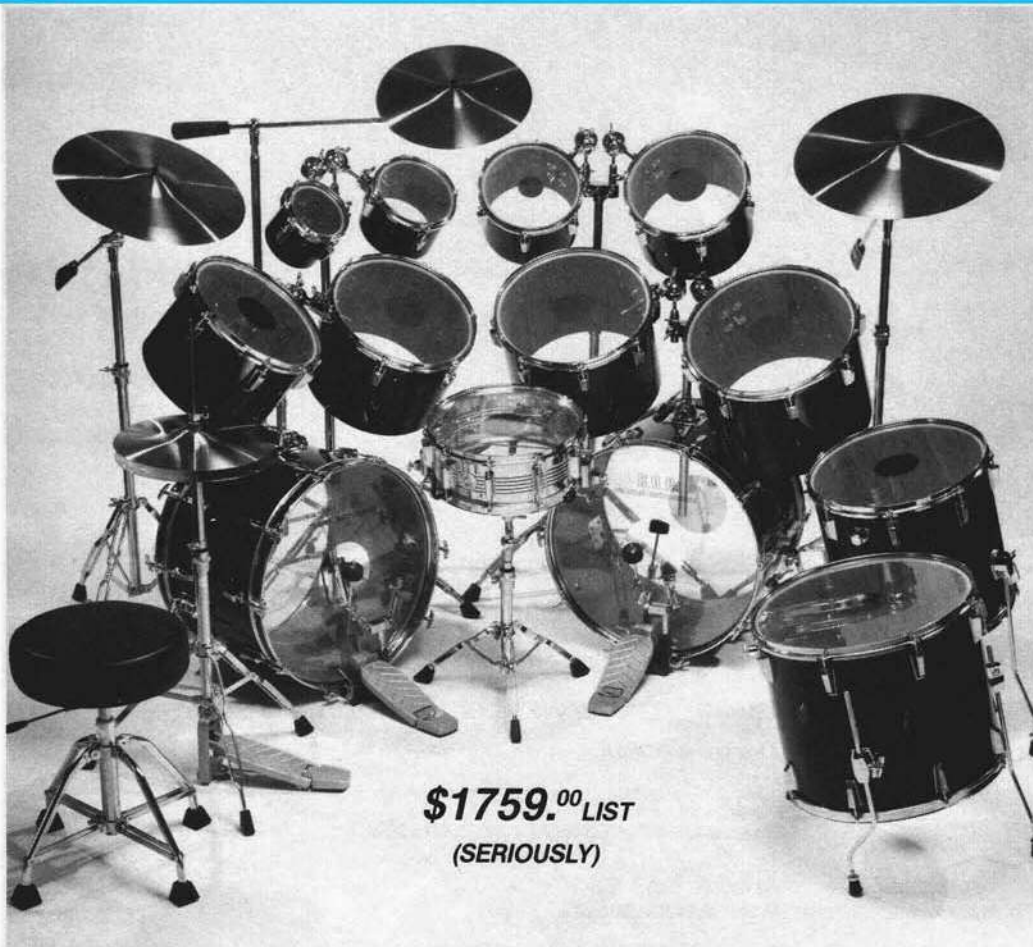
Pro-Mark has added the 707N nylon tip model to its Texas Hickory line of drumsticks. This model is also available with a wood tip. The new stick features a round, ball-shaped nylon tip. It is 16 1/4" long, and 9/16" in diameter. The 707 diameter is best

described as being the same as that of the traditional Pro-Mark 5A. The 707 is used and endorsed by Simon Phillips, Ed Shaughnessy, and Terry Bozzio.

Pro-Mark's *Stick Rapp* gripping tape is now available in a checkerboard pattern. The three color combinations now available are: black/red, yellow/black, and white/black. **Pro-Mark, 10707 Craighead Drive, Houston, TX 77025.**

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SENNHEISER MD 518 DYNAMIC MIC'



Sennheiser Electronic has introduced the MD 518 dynamic microphone, specifically

designed for sound reinforcement of high sound pressure signals, which include vocal and percussion miking. According to Sennheiser, a smooth cardioid pickup pattern ensures maximum rejection of unwanted sounds from the rear of the MD 518 and allows for use in close proximity of stage monitors and side fill cabinets. Since the MD 518 is highly insensitive to strong magnetic fields such as those from speaker cabinets, it can be utilized near large stage speakers without worry of hum and buzz. **Sennheiser Electronic Corporation, 6 Vista Dr., Box 987, Old Lyme, CT 06371. Tel.: (203) 434-9190, Fax: (203) 434-1759.**

DCI RELEASES FOLLOW-UP WECKL VIDEO



DCI Music Video has announced the September 1 release of

Dave Weckl's *The Next Step* video, the follow-up to his *Back To Basics* video, released by DCI last year. *The Next Step* is 80 minutes long and features lots of playing by Dave on songs such as "Spur Of The Moment" and "Rainy Day," from his audiocassette package *Contemporary Drummer + One*. On the new video, Dave covers topics like practicing with the click, constructing a groove, hi-hat technique, and orchestrating a drum part. He also provides detailed pointers in advanced areas such as soloing, beat displacement (or "playing backwards"), and odd times. **DCI Music Video, 541 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10011, (212) 691-1884.**

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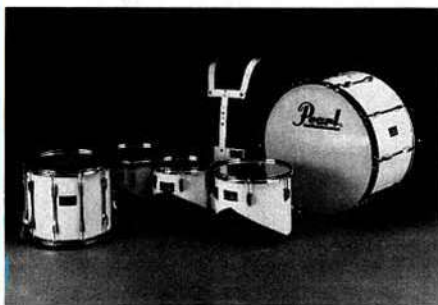
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phone on two toms, Mr. Wittet says, "let it rest." In other words, if you do this, you're wrong. On using many toms, he says, "the fewer the better." (I guess Neil Peart and Chester Thompson know nothing about recording.) He also kisses the butts of Steve Gadd, Dave Mattacks, and Jim Keltner. These three gentlemen are great drummers, but kissing their butts shows poor taste. Mr. Wittet goes on to say, "My favorite setup would be a 10" in a deep depth, and 12", and a 14x14." Are we all supposed to use this setup? I have nothing against using smaller toms; I use them myself. But I think drummers know what they want. For instance, John Bonham and Buddy Rich would have sounded silly with these size toms.

Finally, to see "The Bryan Adams Sound" listed in the sidebar—as if Bryan himself played the drums. No credit was given to the drummers who have played with Mr. Adams. I could go on for eight pages, but I think you get the point. Mr. Wittet should not only turn in his typewriter, but should apologize for writing such a piece of trash and offending so many drummers!

Stephen Browne
Dumont NJ

T. Bruce Wittet replies: Boy, did you get up on the wrong side of the bed, Stephen! Let's just think ten seconds before we speak next time. I know I did in conceiving the article in question. The piece was, I had thought, delivered in a spirit of humility and open criticism. Many of the ideas presented—such as choice of heads—derived

from a diary I've kept for 15 years, since my first demos. I thought I'd share some of my conclusions—in a non-dogmatic way—in an effort to help young drummers get through the first hurdle in a studio setting (just as, with admirable patience, Jim Keltner and Dave Mattacks did with me). If these two, plus Steve Gadd (who I don't know from Adam, except through his work) are not your benchmarks, well then, what can I say? Carlos Vega perhaps, or Jeff Porcaro...? Better?

Please excuse my omission—quite intended—of Neil Peart. He speaks lucidly for himself often in these pages on how he achieves his signature sound. As for my reference to Simon Phillips, you have misconstrued my tribute to him. I mean, don't "let it rest" at that, Stephen. Co ahead and set up nine toms on a studio date. You sound like you've been around the block a couple of times and could handle it. But pity the poor youngster in a little neighborhood studio where they don't have enough mic's for all nine toms. He's got a major job on his hands, and thus I uttered a suggestion of smaller size drums—for reasons given—and fewer of them. This is not the "T. Bruce Wittet sound," this is logic and compassion. (And by the way, John Bonham sounded like John Bonham on a Ludwig Jazzette kit that he kept in his basement. See my tribute in MD's July '84 issue.) The "Bryan Adams" drum sound is cited for generic value. Yes, credit should go to both Pat Steward and Mickey Curry.

Finally, as for "offending" drummers: I've just returned from L.A., where many top studio players graciously complimented me on the article. I'm not going to name drop, lest I be accused again of stooping to the Freudian lengths you accuse me of in your letter. But even more important: The street-level response was favorable. When I walk into the Pro Drum Shop on Vine St. and witness the proprietor patiently choosing a whole set of cymbals for a drummer who will surely never see his teens again, I know that there's a range of players out there who can use any advice they can get. That's why I started writing for MD.

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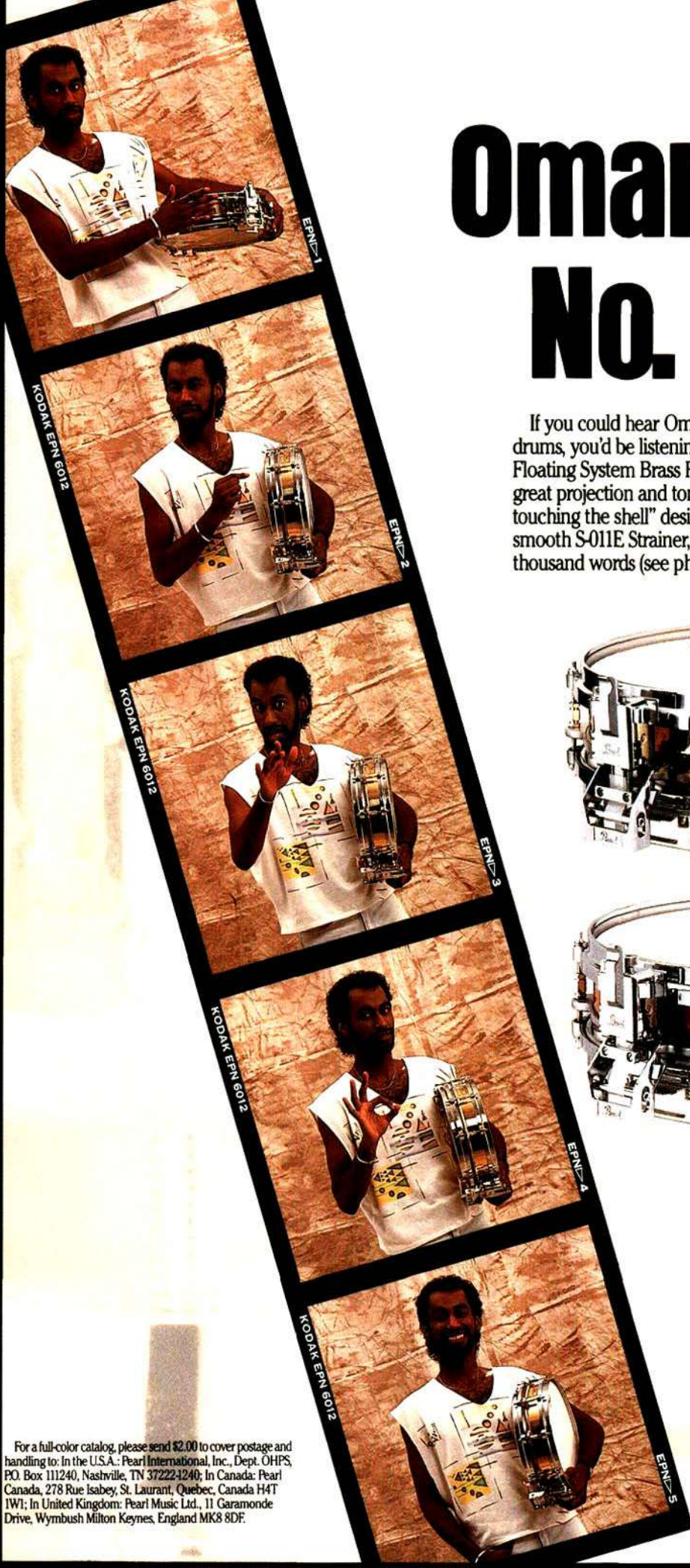
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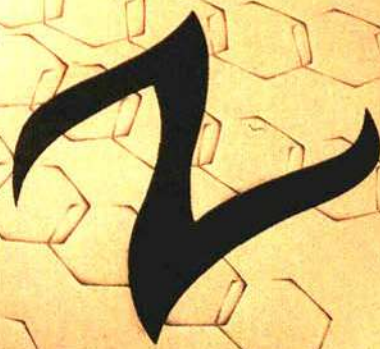
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